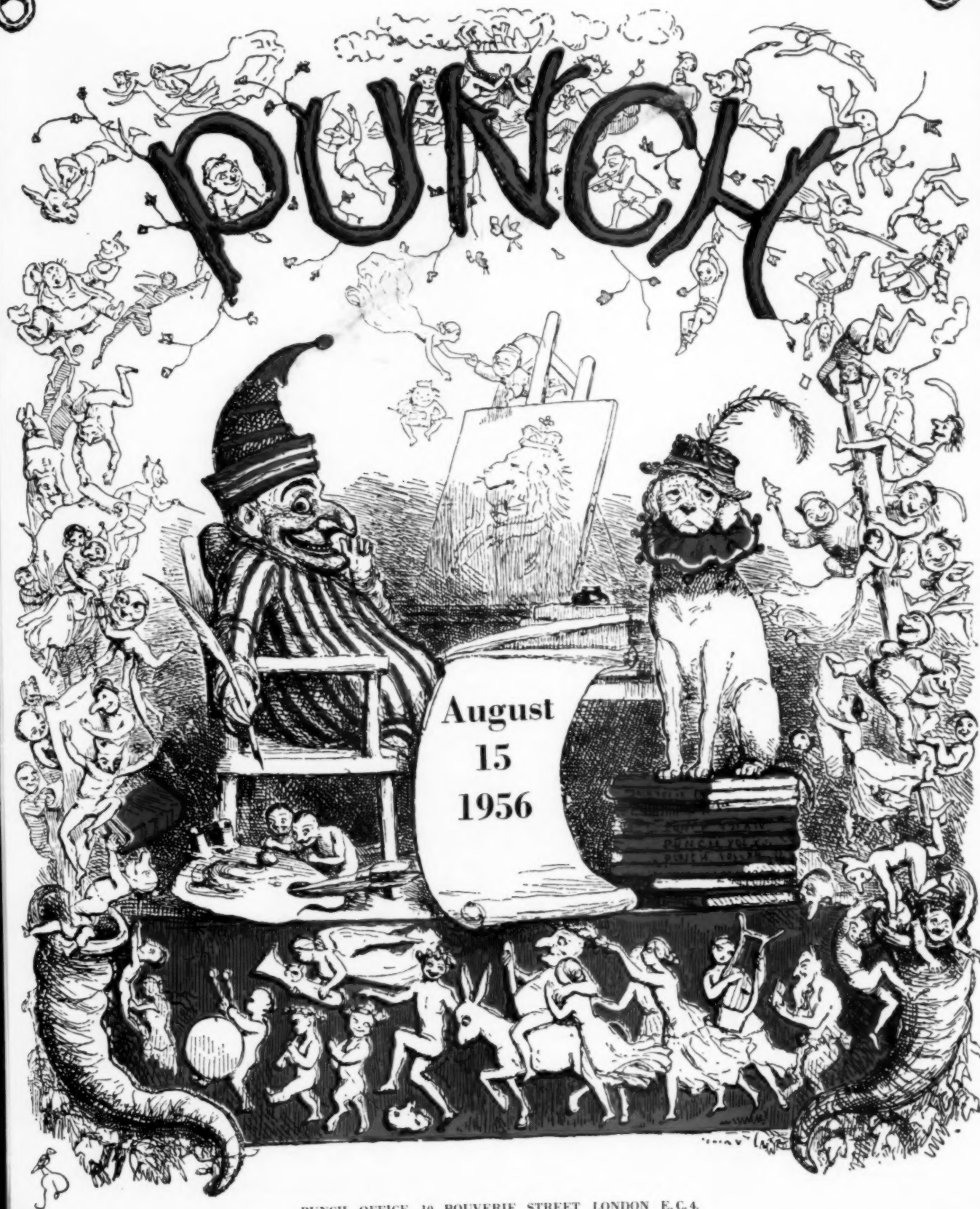


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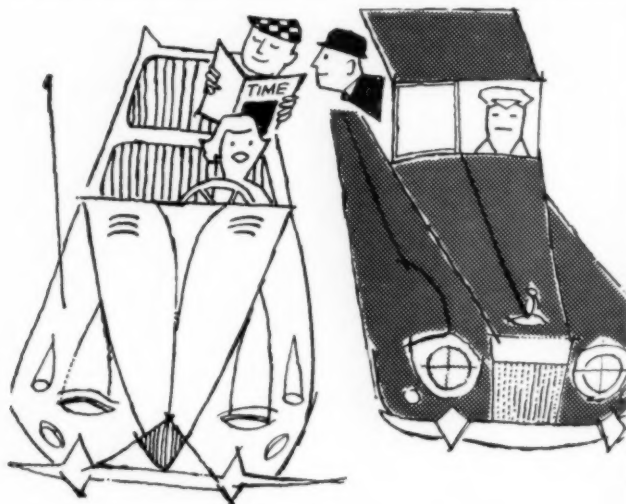


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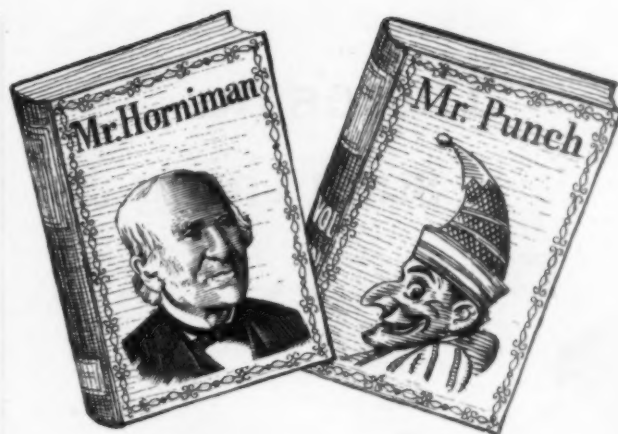
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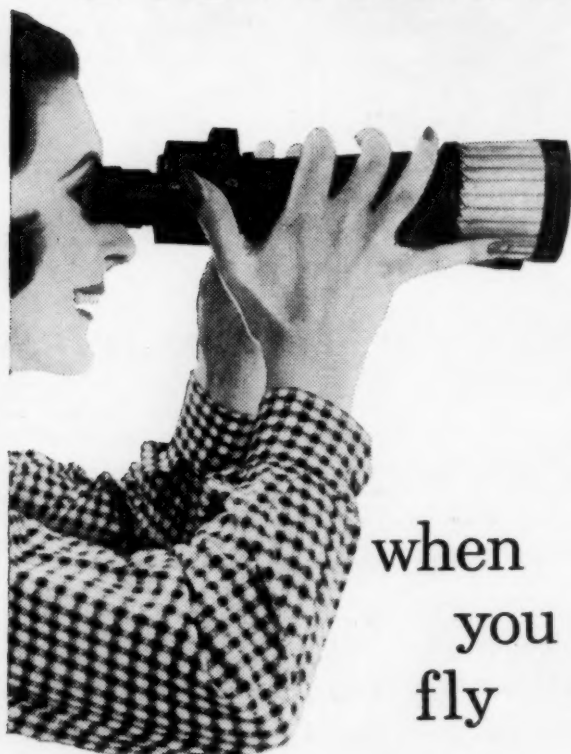
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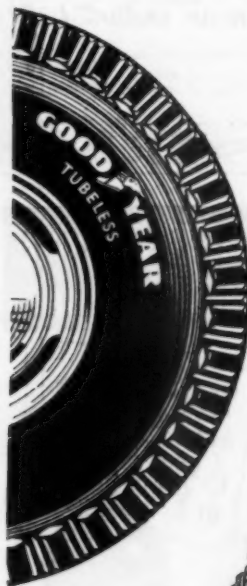


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At the 46th Annual General Meeting of The London County Freehold and Leasehold Properties Limited held on July 30 in London, Mr. Thomas J. Cullen, Chairman and Managing Director, presided and in the course of his speech said:—

Our gross rental income for the year, including interest receivable on our loan in Rhodesia, totalled £2,482,386, being £142,826 more than last year. After tax (other than profits tax attributable to dividends) and other adjustments the total available balance was £670,713, compared with £601,147 last year.

The increase in gross income was £143,163 and the increased outgoings, including tax (other than profits tax attributable to dividends) amounted to £75,439. A substantial portion of the additional gross income is due to the payments by tenants towards the increased cost of services and repairs under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954; but, on the other hand, the major portion of the increased outgoings is due to the rise in the cost of services, maintenance and management since the passing of the Act. It is hoped that this result, in a year of ever increasing costs, will be considered satisfactory.

The Government have definitely promised a general review of the Rent Acts and I am sure it will be realized that to continue to hold down rents where they are inclusive of services such as hot water, heating, lifts and portage is quite unreasonable in these days of rising costs.

Some people at the moment appear to think the general remedy for all our ills is for the Local Authority to take over all houses and flats which are rent-controlled.

I wonder how any Public Authority, as Landlords, would keep the rents fixed whilst finding the money for the increased cost of services. Whichever the course adopted, I am convinced that public authorities could not manage blocks of flats with services economically and efficiently, and that it would be very much against the interests of the tenants that they should attempt to do so.



New office block in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia (right)
Wildcroft Manor, Putney Heath—fine residential flats (left)



The two increases in profits tax—a tax that seems to me quite illogical—will substantially increase next year's outgoings. Our increased income from lettings during the past year will, however, provide a sum sufficient to more than cover that increase. The demand for all our properties—both residential and commercial—is insistent and we are entitled to look forward to continued improvement in our net income.

I am glad to say that our plans in Rhodesia are progressing favourably. We expect very shortly to enter into contracts that will enable us to confirm the establishment of a permanent Branch Office in Salisbury and a Subsidiary Company there.

Next year our Accounts will benefit from a full year's income from the Salisbury loan. If we are able to expand the further improved income would not accrue until 1958.

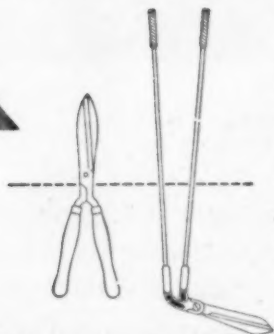
The two existing properties, coupled with the two proposed properties, would have a total value of nearly £1,500,000.

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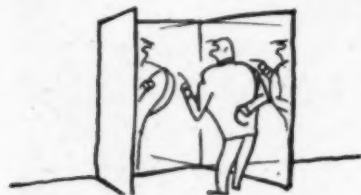


CHARIVARIA

AMONG the lesser repercussions of the Suez Canal affair is the probable refusal of the Egyptian Government to accept a giant astronomical telescope, made to their order by a Newcastle firm. There is a fear, apparently, that some of Colonel Nasser's subjects might get hold of it and look at him through the wrong end.

More to Go at

LORD BOYD ORR's prophecy in an address to the Liberal Summer School, that at the present rate of increase the



population may double in fifty years, has been hailed as the best hope for Liberalism yet.

Hearthrug Vacancy

A CHANGE in national trends seems to be indicated by the Post Office figures for last year, which show that television licences made immense strides but that 268,000 fewer dog licences were issued than in 1950. Though this has interested sociologists it has worried dog-lovers, who will no doubt lose no time in pressing for an R.S.P.C.A. investigation. It might reveal that in an increasing number of British homes, when the question crops up whether to re-license the TV set or the dog, the dog loses. It is just a matter, after all, of who shall be put to sleep.

Got to Keep Mobile.

THAT a policy of disarmament cannot go hand-in-hand with one of full employment is a thought inseparable

from the news that the naval cordite factory at Holton Heath is to be reduced to a state of care and maintenance, with three hundred and fifty workers out of a job. The only solution seems to be to sign them on making atomic warheads for guided missiles.

Old Stuff

FOCUSES of international ease shift subtly. A seven-line item on one of last week's front pages slipped in quietly under the headline "Mau Mau Beaten."

Low I.Q.s up There

Now that they have considered the claim, by a Dr. Kraus of Ohio, that someone on Venus is trying to make radio contact with Earth, astronomers point out stiffly that the atmosphere of Venus makes it impossible for "intelligent beings" to live there. Dr. Kraus feels that this lines up quite well with his theory.

Spectrum

SIR ROBERT BOOTHBY says he sometimes wonders if the British are interested in anything but horse-racing,



cricket, Marilyn Monroe and Jack Spot. Lord, yes. Dog-racing, football, Diana Dors and Billy Hill.

Farm Vote

COLORADO's Republican candidate for Senator has challenged his Democrat rival to decide the election by a "cotton-picking, wheat-shocking, cow-milking, calf-roping and cow-branding" contest.

What he overlooks is that no Colorado electorate, finding a man who can pick cotton, shock wheat, milk cows, rope or brand, is going to send him to waste his time in the Senate.

Business World Note

INVITED to tender for electrical equipment wanted by a New Zealand undertaking, fifteen British manufacturers quoted identical prices. This meant that they were *all* too high.

Shaggy Sea-dog Story

AFTER five years of painstaking research involving the consultation of old charts, records, weather conditions,



channel depths, distinguishing landmarks and "other physical conformation data," the Drake Navigators' Guild have at last succeeded in settling the historical controversy over where Sir Francis Drake landed in California. It comes as rather an anti-climax to find that he landed at Drake's Bay.

Front Page Flowers

PHOTOGRAPHS of Guy Burgess's mother leaving the aircraft after her Russian visit showed among her belongings a long, narrow parcel with a rounded end; this turned out to be a wrapped balalaika and not, as many *Daily Express* readers must have assumed, a bouquet from the *Daily Express*.

Anyway, Declare it Open

COINCIDENT with the new *Evening Standard* competition ("How keen is

your eye for spotting a celebrity?") an advertisement for a Herne Bay fete announced that it would be opened by "Dilys Powell, 'Mrs. Dale' of 'Mrs. Dale's Diary.'" It is not known how keen were the eyes of the celebrity-spotter at the fete, but no doubt there were heated arguments among the cognoscenti about whether the gracious lady on the rostrum was a Sunday film-critic, a radio actress or the hard-working wife of a hard-working G.P. For the rest, they probably thought that she was C. A. Lejeune, "Mrs. Dan Archer" of "The Archers."

Oil Note

MOSCOW radio reports that Russian manufacturers have perfected a car guaranteed to do one hundred and forty-five miles to the gallon. It seems bad luck that Western export markets must remain untapped as long as they want to keep on present good terms with Colonel Nasser.

Ashes to Ashes

(Runners carrying the Olympic torch from Cairns, Queensland, to Melbourne will be followed by men with fire-extinguishers to avert the risk of grass fires.)

SWIFT o'er the grass the runners came
To bear ahead the sacred flame
That stood for friendships freshly
seal'd
And comradeship on track and field
And differences of every sort
Decided in the name of sport,
While ever close behind them stay'd,
Hard on their heels, the Fire Brigade.
Fraternity and fire alike have grounds
For being kept in fairly narrow bounds.



"It's no business of mine, of course,
but isn't your Mr. Nixon just too
disgustingly fit?"

Troop-Deck Ballad

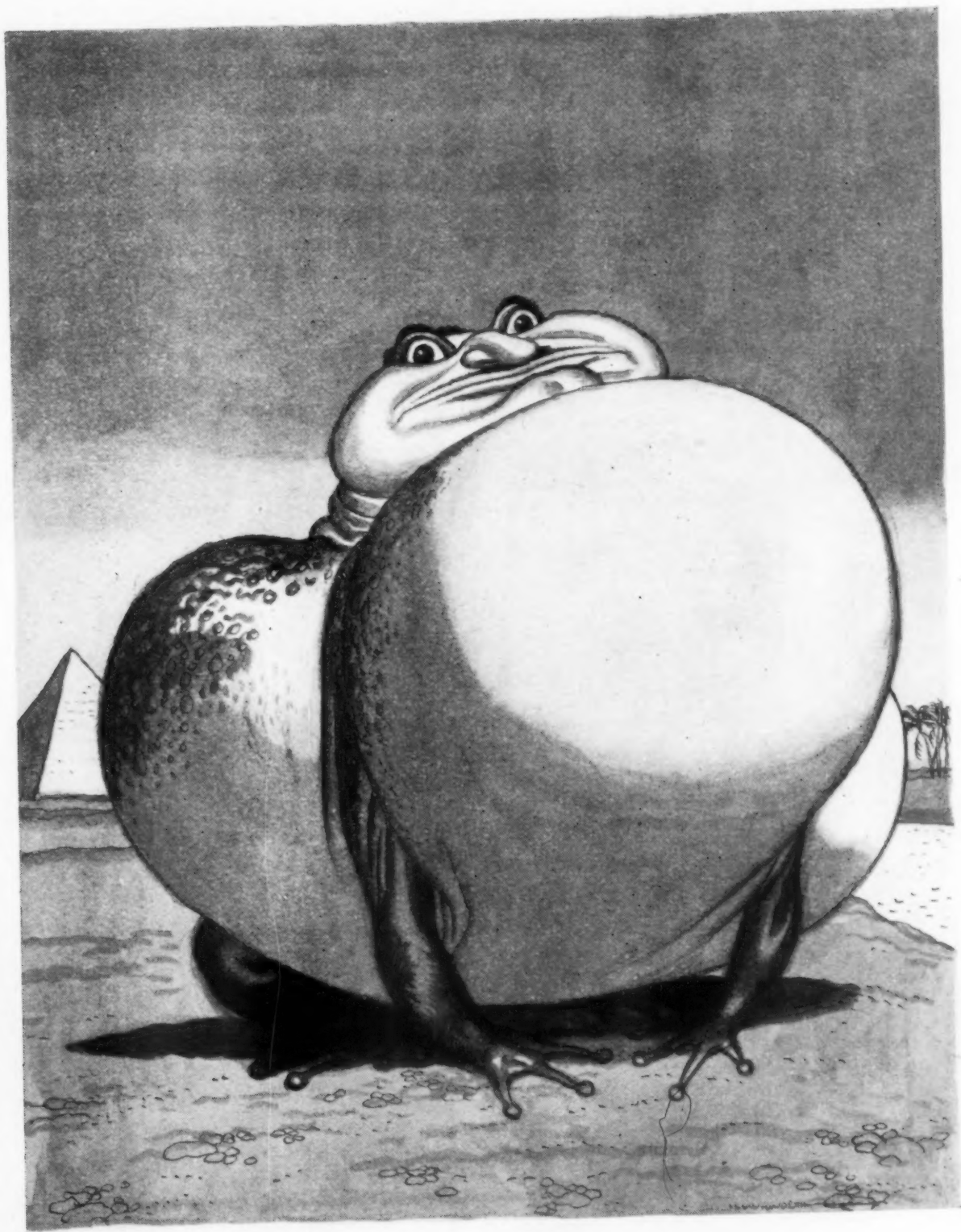
I COULD talk like one o' Kipling's ruddy 'eroes if I tried
(Ballads in the barrack-rooms and royalties galore!)
But I'm just a paratrooper, and I've not much time for side,
And dialect is really such a bore.
Oh, I'm just a paratrooper and I'm sailing to the East
To bolster up the shares in the Canal;
And what it's got to do with me I don't know in the least,
And in spite of all the papers, I dare say I never shall.
But it's: Call out the Reserve!
Call out the Reserve once more!
There's a lot of chits that say
Class A! Class A!
Fall in the Reserve for the war!

I did five years with the Colours and I got discharged last May
(Wallop in the sitting-room and all the neighbours round!)
And I got a job as fitter in a works up Luton way
That brought me in a steady fifteen pound.
But when they called the old Reserve I gladly packed it in—
I wouldn't see Old England up the creek.
And we'll Hang Out the Washing on the palace of Abdin
And knock this dastard Nasser to the middle of next week!
For it's, etc.

There's another whole division coming out to fight the Wogs
(And a squadron's-worth of Canberras no further off than Malta)
And three small aircraft-carriers to show the dirty dogs
Who owns the Med from Jaffa to Gibraltar.
For the serried ranks of Gyppos (backed by Jordan and Iraq)
Are Egyptians we'll be very glad to spoil,
When the voice that breathes from Eden says we've got to have a crack
So the motorists of England shall never lack for oil.
And it's, etc.

But I wish I understood it; we'd some blokes the other day
(Base-wallahs mostly, but they'd rifles in the store)
Which we took away from Egypt in a peaceful kind of way,
And all we seem to get from it is war.
We put them into Cyprus as a mighty British base,
A Middle-Eastern Jewel in the Crown;
But when old Nasser takes to shooting off his ugly face
They have to send for chaps like me to come and slap him down.
So it's: Call out the Reserve!
Call out the Reserve once more!
It may seem slightly barmy,
But we've got to have an Army,
So fall in the Reserve for the war!

B. A. YOUNG



Past and Present

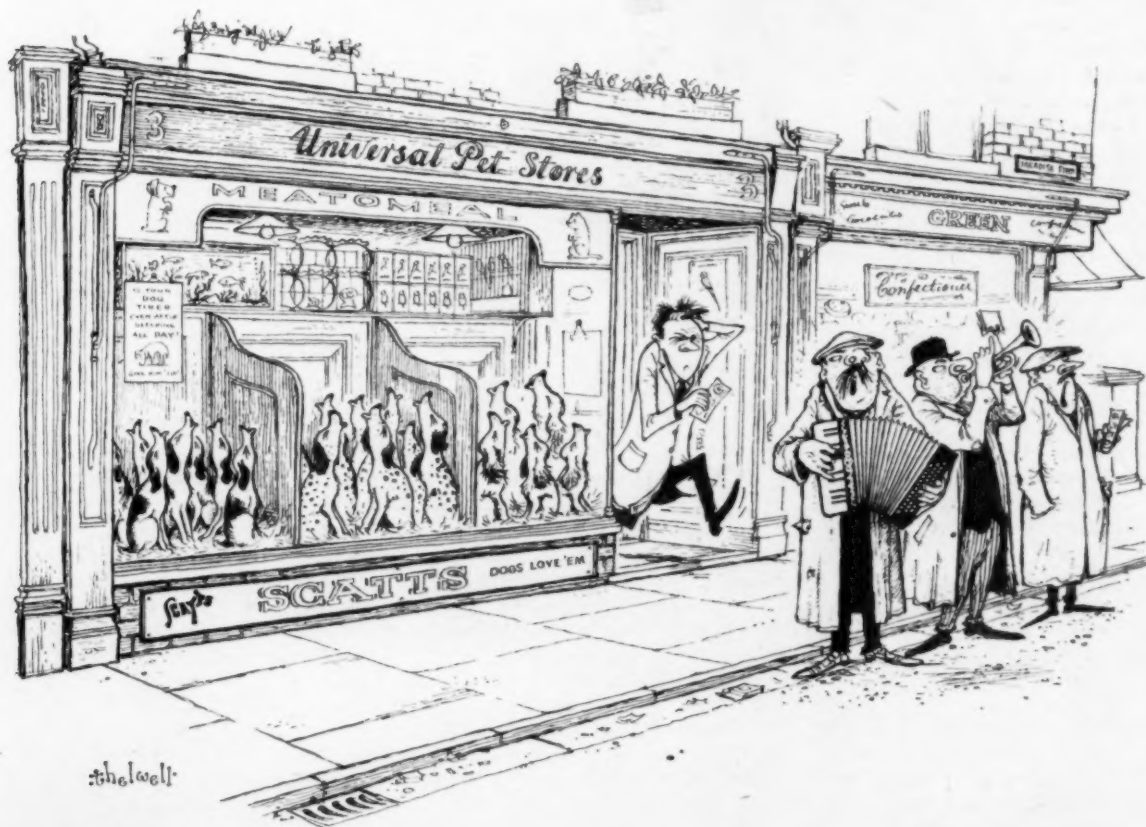
By R. G. G. PRICE

THE great Victorian authors were admirable at solo activities, like fulminating; but they lacked the skill of their successors at the more communal aspects of eminence. I doubt whether Swinburne would have fielded to the general satisfaction at the Authors v. Publishers Match or whether Emily Brontë would have made as nice a chum for Miss Marilyn Monroe as Dame Edith Sitwell. Consider the easy, gay, conversational give-and-take of the B.B.C.'s Television Brains Trust. In a good week you can see the contemporary equivalents of Kelvin, Thring, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Leslie Stephen. But what a difference in urbanity!

Listening to Mr. T. S. Eliot taking the Chair at the Annual Meeting of the London Library, I thought how much better he thanked the staff and discussed binding costs and made little

jokes about being unable to understand rating than his great predecessor Carlyle would have done. With his courteous bearing and precise diction, Mr. Eliot is a tranquillizing figure, unlike Carlyle, and, though he has much the same disapproval of his Age as Carlyle had of his, he has a knack of suggesting that his audience forms a break in the general gloom, which Carlyle seems to have lacked. I do not know who was the Victorian equivalent of Sir Harold Nicolson. If there had been one, Carlyle would probably have glared at him through beetling brows, while Mr. Eliot gazed at Sir Harold like a cat which had been given cream when it felt it deserved only milk. This may well have been the only suitable expression. As Sir Harold was inaudible, I shall never know. He certainly looked as though his remarks were intended to be well worth hearing.

One activity of the contemporary eminent, especially the overseas eminent, is taking a busy part in the discussions and cocktail parties arising from P.E.N. Imagine a conference with Tennyson, George Eliot and Hardy acting as hosts to Flaubert, Mark Twain and Ibsen. It sounds like a Beachcomber paragraph. Yet to-day this sort of thing is taken for granted. So is writing to *The Times* about taxation. I do not know what Browning or Hopkins were like on Revenue Law. Hopkins as a Jesuit presumably had no income, which must have simplified his approach to the subject, if his approach to any subject could be simplified. Mr. Eliot has an expert knowledge of banking which, with very few lapses, he manages to keep out of his poetry. Browning would not have been able to do this. However, even authors without Mr. Eliot's advantages not only discuss the plight of the

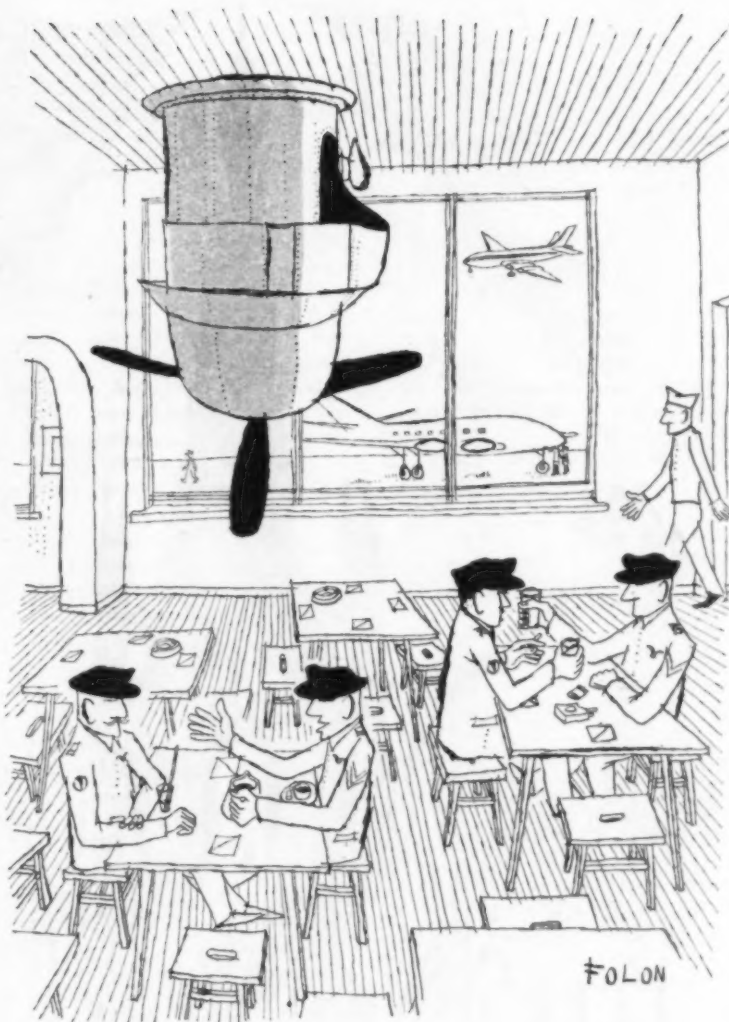


writer in general terms but quote passages from the Finance Acts.

Where contemporary authors fall a bit short is in making the grade in politics. They certainly have views that are as firm as any sane man could wish, and they hold meetings and they write pamphlets; but they never lose their amateur status. No writer of Thackeray's weight stands for Parliament. No writer of Macaulay's weight gets into the Cabinet. Of course it is only reasonable to exclude writers who are mainly writers on politics, like Mill or Mr. Strachey. I am not so sure about Sir Winston Churchill, always a hard man to exclude. Anyway, I can hurry on to point out that Bulwer-Lytton was Secretary of State for the Colonies while—but how hard it is to think of a modern equivalent of Bulwer-Lytton, and what a light that throws on literary history.

French writers are treated as near-gurus, but the opinions of English writers are not taken all that seriously; perhaps because they are so much more amiable and co-operative they are more easily brushed aside. There has undeniably been a falling-off in pronouncements. Mr. Eliot talked in a melancholy way about Civilization, but Carlyle would have told us what to think about Jack Spot. Sir Harold may have done this, of course, though it is not a subject on which it is easy to be both relevant and urbane. Go back as far as the Lynskey Tribunal. Did any writer give a firm lead to public opinion? I cannot think of one. Ruskin, however, would not have let the opportunity pass.

The Victorians who sat in Cabinets and thundered and took strong lines, however much their readers would have preferred them to be quieter and more approachable, threw themselves so violently into these activities that they can have had very little energy left for the pruning and rewriting that exhausts their successors and mellows them. It may have been the effort needed to cover each page so monosyllabically that has kept Miss Compton-Burnett from savouring the sweets of office. If *The Waste Land* had just gone on and on like *Frederick the Great*, Mr. Eliot's gestures might well have been more minatory and we of his audience, instead of drifting gently away, might have reeled out of the meeting flayed yet toughened by his scorn.



Unlucky Jims

WHAT miserable lives they lead, these men of my own generation:

Unhappy among the nappies they write of their deep misgiving
About themselves, their politics and the terrible state of the nation

Which faced them all with Redbrick and changed their way of living.

Who is supposed to pity them—old men with letters added

To their own as well as their fathers' names by the ancient seats of learning
Or the boys whose lives the Welfare State has only partially padded—

C-stream types with a low I.Q., but a very high rate of earning?

What is Truth (apart, of course, from being a source of income)?

One reaction at least I know to be something more than a rumour—
It's hard to feel much sympathy, however clever we think 'em,

For men with autobiographies devoid of a sense of humour.

ANTHONY BRODE



"Disgusting! At Festival time, too!"

Re Helicopters : To the Secretary of State for Air

August 1st

SIR,—I write to protest against the unwarrantable frequency with which I find myself rescued by your helicopters. On the first occasion on which I was snatched from the sea while enjoying a quiet float beyond the breakers I was prepared to make light of the incident. This is a normal holiday risk, which in my opinion it is the duty of members of the public to accept in the right spirit. But enough is as good as a feast. I have now three times been hoisted into the air and ferried to St. Mawgan aerodrome, where everybody, I admit, has been most kind and attentive—too kind, if anything. Constant wrapping in warm blankets has brought my skin out in an irritating rash; nor am I a man who cares over-much for copious draughts of hot, sweet tea.

The pilot considers that my habit of floating very low in the water misleads holidaymakers ashore into thinking that I am waterlogged or in distress. That is as it may be. I cannot alter my centre of gravity or buoyancy co-efficiency, at will, to suit your convenience. Surely there is some alternative method of protecting the not-so-portly against the intrusive zeal of your Air Rescue organization?

August 5th

SIR,—It is no use saying that it is open to anyone not in immediate danger to refuse to be rescued. Quite apart from the question of good manners, if one attempts to ignore the machine or to brush the hoisting tackle aside, the crew conclude that one is either unconscious or hysterical and send a man down by rope-ladder to see about it. Only yesterday, while sunbathing in a small deserted cove, I attempted to move out of the shadow created by one of your infernal contraptions and found myself suddenly seized from behind and forcibly buckled into a kind of surcingle made of harsh webbing. It is ludicrous to suggest that I was in any danger of being cut off by the tide; but the pilot—not the one who generally rescues me, by the way: this was an altogether more domineering and self-sufficient type—would not listen to reason. He simply said that he had his

orders and proposed to carry them out—with the result that I was late for lunch for the third day running, and dared not take my usual afternoon dip in case I missed a tennis engagement after tea.

I shall be obliged if you will take immediate steps to see that your rescue organization turns its attention to some other holidaymaker, preferably one who stands in need of it.

August 7th

SIR,—After a momentary respite (due in part, I think, to my practice of laying out warning "KEEP OFF" notices with strips of sheeting whenever I seek seclusion on the rocks and cliffs hereabouts) the situation has again worsened. I am now constantly attended by a large yellow helicopter, hired I believe by a London newspaper to take photographs of any further attempts that may be made to rescue me by air. The noise is indescribable, and whenever I try to escape it by taking refuge in a cave or holding my breath under water some busybody can be relied on to ring up St. Mawgan and bring a second helicopter on the scene. I have noticed, too, that I am now kept dangling in the air, before being hauled into the rescue machine, for a longer period than was the case at the beginning of my holiday. This I believe (though I cannot prove it) is done at the request of the photographers, who seem to be hand-in-glove with the authorities at St. Mawgan. I shall hold you entirely responsible if any harm comes to me through the almost perpetual draughts to which I am now exposed.

* * * * *

I reopen this letter to add that my wife has just returned in an R.A.F. truck and in a very highly-strung condition from St. Austell, of all places. It appears, so far as I can piece her story together, that she was violently scooped from the water while actually sitting on an inflated horse—an inexcusably careless mistake—and deposited, horse and all, on a makeshift aerodrome without any proper facilities for resuscitating people suffering from needless rescue. When I rang up St. Mawgan to protest, they told

me that their regular rescue craft was already out on a case (as if I needed to be told that!) when this second call came in. They had accordingly been compelled to ask Plymouth for assistance, and it might be that the pilot from there was *less experienced in rescue work than their own men* and had picked up the wrong bather by mistake. The italics are mine, but the responsibility, in my submission, remains yours.

August 8th

SIR,—You will see, from the enclosed cutting from a local paper headed "HORSE RESCUED FROM SEA," something of the annoyance to which we as a family are almost daily subjected by the attentions of your rescue service. The very indifferent photograph of my wife does not help matters.

However, that is not the main purpose of this letter. I write to inform you that, in a final attempt to obtain a little peace and privacy before returning to London on the 10th, I am to-morrow taking my wife, sister-in-law, two cousins, a Mrs. Winworth, and most of our children to Lundy Island in a hired motor-boat. We hope to be there by about 2.30 p.m. and have not, of course, thought it necessary to make any arrangements about the return journey.

We should like to reach St. Mawgan not later than 7.0 p.m., if that will be convenient for you.

Yours faithfully,
H. F. ELLIS



Horse Show

By CLAUD COCKBURN

NEITHER Colonel Nasser nor Sir Anthony Eden (who, as many people know, is Britain's current Prime Minister) was present with me here at the Dublin Horse Show (which, as many people know, is quite a horse show), and that was, in a minor way, unfortunate because had they been so present they would have realized once and for all that their differences—quarrels, if you insist on sensationalism—about that Canal pale, but very, very definitely pale, in comparison with differences about a horse or horses.

In other words the Colonel and, if I may so describe him, "Tony" (I like to think of them both as "my friends" because it sort of makes me "see" them both around the TV screen, one in Cairo, the other, nearer and dearer to us all, standing by at Chequers) would

have found that their tiff looked like a nice afternoon in the nursery compared with the way some people felt after the judgment in the Ladies Light-heavyweight Hunters Class.

As I understand it—and my information, I want to say at once, was entirely contradictory and in many cases erroneous—the wrong horse won.

I was very much surprised and disappointed at the news. I have attended Dublin Horse Show, greatest horse show on earth, for many a long year, and my reason for so doing—apart from the natural human pleasure I take in being around and about in this lovely town with these many lovely horses and women and spry old men on shooting sticks who encourage one to believe that if, with all the whisky they knock back, they can live to a hundred one can

personally live to one hundred and ten—is that I want to be present when the right horse wins a given event. Any event.

A fortune-teller at the Shelbourne Hotel—and remind me to tell you some time a funny story about when Elizabeth Bowen, famed novelist, started to write the story of the place and people got worried because they didn't like to think of anyone looking at the names of those registered across the long years in the double rooms in case of error—told me only so-and-so long ago that around 1960 they are going to pick the right horse. The judges are going to be acclaimed by one and all. People are going to say—this is in 1960—that nobody could dispute for an instant the judges' decision, and that in any case nobody could say that any one of the judges was swayed by so much as a hairsbreadth by any personal considerations—whether familial, financial, or political.

It certainly is going to be a great day there in 1960.

A woman whose particular friend did not win this event is just shouting into my ear that 1960 will be no better than 1956. What, I ask her, in the name of the Higher Truth, is her reason for this desperately defeatist prediction? She has now told it me. I can only say that it is far too libellous to print. I personally would term it an animadversion—I do not wish to use a stronger term—upon some of those concerned with the upshot and outcome of the entire affair. She is saying—Heavens, how women do talk—that the whole thing was "fixed." I deny that, and if it doesn't rain on these lovely grounds at Ballsbridge before I have time to testify that the best horse nearly won, I shall go out and proclaim it not only to a chap over there, who before he took to a bathchair won the Crimean and other wars, but also to these two American sailors who—like all Americans—are having a tiff about a recent novel which does or does not depict the Problem of the South in fully obsessional terms. If those boys ever get to sea at the business end of a gun, all I can say is Heaven help Nasser.

There is a flower show here too, and in a naïve moment I thought I would get away from the heat invariably engendered by the horse, to the peace and quiet of





those lovely, lovely blossoms. Not so. The wrong petunia has won. And if you want to know why that is, all I can advise you to do is to recall the relations existing between her aunt and that woman.

It's possibly a little late to tell you to drop everything and dash over to Dublin, but I do beg you to put the thing in your diary of Things to do Next Year.

Nothing more confusing is ever going to happen to you, or you, or even *you*.

But now that I have been in a position to give you a clear picture, you will see your way. Is there anything else you would care to know? I knew you would come up with some terrible quiz question. I can't answer it at the moment, but I understand that the fellow concerned was *not* Aly Khan and that the man who had his arm broken at a social occasion admitted it had been

"rather fun, on the whole." Why he had to qualify in such niggardly fashion his tribute to the pleasures of a Hunt Ball in Dublin I am at a loss to understand.

On, as I seem to be, about this social "aspect," as I sometimes term it, of the gathering, I suppose I should mention the Beit party which, rumour whispers, cost ten, twenty, five, three or more or less thousand pounds. I had in mind to say to a man I was talking to—whose horse had been wrongfully judged out of first place at the Show—something about putting the Beit on. Fortunately I gave up in time, and here we are, back in the studio studying the form of the judges.

Did you ever see a judge, umpire, or referee actually shot? Right in front of your eyes? Nor did I, but if you'll excuse me I'll hurry back to the ring. It's not a thing I'd care to miss.

A Modern Stoic

A RUCKSACK and a walking-stick
Are all that I shall keep.
Sophistication makes me sick
And sends my soul to sleep.

I'll leave behind my stocks and shares,
My gold and silver plate,
My stately home, my sons and heirs;
Farewell the Welfare State!

Then I'll sustain with berries sweet
My primitive adventures,
Nor long for meat I cannot eat
Without my upper dentures.

And I shall steep in poetry
And shout stanzaic frenzies
Of birds and flowers I cannot see
Without my contact-lenses.

HAZEL TOWNSON

The Learned Friend

By GEOFFREY LINCOLN

AMONG the obstacles to winning cases, such as the Judge, the law, a mad client, natural justice and a solicitor of ninety who has left all the papers at home, comes, more or less high on the list, the barrister on the other side. In all but undefended divorce cases, where the only opposition is provided by the Judge, the law, a mad client, etc., this learned-friend business is sure to arise. Up, just as all is going smoothly, he is likely to leap, paid to object to you, defeat you and get you condemned in costs. It is therefore as well to get to know this hazard in all its forms. Something can often be done to neutralize its effect by a few well-chosen words outside the door of the Court. The following rules are by no means exhaustive, they can no doubt be added

to by experience, but they will be found a useful basis for beginners.

The young opponent: The direct approach is best. He will be found seated outside the Court sweating slightly, his pale wig gleaming, flanked by piles of Law Reports and reading the elaborate note of his opening speech he has prepared in three different coloured inks. Use an astounded glance at his books, a low whistle and an appalled voice for "My dear chap, you're not going to get us involved in the law are you?" If this doesn't shake him try, "I hear Tommy (showing immediate knowledge of the Judge's Christian name) wants to crack us up. Got some garden party. I told his clerk I wouldn't be long." In a defended divorce case try "I'm so afraid if you go on fighting he'll chuck

us both out." In any case judicious and effective use can be made of "Good heavens, is *that* your client?" or "I usually travel up with your instructing solicitor in the train."

The middle-aged opponent: Given time and patience the middle-aged, successful learned friend is easier to soften up than the young one who is longing to make his speech and may have unearthed something pretty deadly in those Law Reports. As he moves towards the Court with his pipe in his mouth and his arm round his solicitor, beaming with the self-confident smile of a man who has almost finished reading his brief, go away and have a cup of coffee. Before the first lump of sugar has gone in, his clerk will be padding up to say "How long do you give this,



"I'm so glad you could come."



sir? We've got a drunk this afternoon and a long rape starting at Lewes to-morrow." Look thoughtful and say "I ought to have called most of my witnesses by next Tuesday." Before the next lump has gone in, your learned friend will be there to ask if it's really necessary to fight the whole thing out. I mean one has to be reasonable and agree something occasionally. I mean I've told my client quite frankly. By that time he is an easy fix and can be bought a cup of coffee.

The elderly opponent: He is the trickiest of the lot. Although he is likely to wander into view wearing an expression of bewildered innocence and a gown which looks as if it had been out on several rough nights with King Lear, he can be extremely artful. What's more, he and the Judge are likely to have been in the same hockey team at Fettes, or they have married each other's nurses, or are otherwise linked in some unspeakable way. They may well form an unholy alliance and be

purposefully obtuse and wilfully deaf. There may even be a barrage of comments from the Bench such as "Speak up. Your friend and I aren't as young as we were," or "I don't think your friend and I have ever heard *that* proposition put forward before." No one can put up with this, and the best thing is to whisper to the ancient friend, as he hobbles into Court, "There's a case dead against you going to be reported in to-morrow's *Times*." If he isn't confused utterly by such a contemporary event, give up.

In Court there are different techniques of dealing with the friend. Some object to everything he says in the hope of getting him rattled, others affect a light, untroubled sleep while he is talking in the hope of making him feel lonely. An effective alternative is to carry on a long and just inaudible conversation of a scandalous nature about the Judge with the solicitor behind. This will almost certainly make the friend, straining to hear, lose his place in the

bundle of correspondence. Help can also be devastating. Wait until he is slowly reading through a bundle of love letters written in 1937 and then leap up and say "I have just been handed this which I think will probably assist my friend," and then insist on putting in the schedule of dilapidations of three rent-controlled houses dated 1954. He will be left gasping and wondering how he has been helped. When making a speech, references to the friend vary from the discourteous "My friend, with that skill in getting the whole case completely confused of which he is the great master," meant to make him feel a fool, to the denigrating "My friend has some fine theories about this case, but you and I, members of the Jury, as men of the world, can understand . . .", meant to make him feel like an untutored nun, to the frankly corny "My friend, who is a clever young man, has brought along books of law. I have only one little book, but it says 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'" (or kill or covet thy

neighbour's ox, or whichever is least appropriate). Luckily this last, or Cecil B. de Mille approach, popular with a silk now dead, has gone out with the quill pens and the great sniffs of snuff and the stout in the robing-room at the Old Bailey.

There are other ways of fixing the friend, such as sending him to the

wrong Court, spilling your glass of water on his notes, or sending him a message "Boiler burst, wife says go home at once." Some of them, however, are likely to cross that narrow line which divides the mean from the unethical. The above general principles should help. Of course they cannot be relied on all the time and it is as well, in case

of emergency, to read the brief and look up the cases. Then as you sit, all prepared, with your books and the note of your speech ready outside the Court, you are bound to hear a low whistle and an appalled voice which says, "You're not going to get us involved in the law are you?" or "Good heavens. Is *that* your client?" or both.

Welcomest When They Are Gone

By TOM GIRTIN

THE view from the top of the *cavea* surpasses description. Remarkable remains (restored) of the *scena*; its acoustic properties are still excellent," says my Guide Book.

This is demonstrably true. The sharp clicking of camera-shutters comes like bursts of tiny machine-gun fire as the party who have just arrived by special train from Stuttgart swarm through the Teatro Greco. At every vantage point, at every *Aussichtspunkt*, Herr Papa, Baedeker in hand, is interpreting the scene to his attendant womenfolk. "Aber herrlich! Wunderschon!" they murmur at the view, "Fantastisch! Ausgezeichnet!" Herr Papa reads out a long passage about Dionysius of

Syracuse taking the town in 392 B.C. "Ja! Ja!" chorus the women, comprehending the fact, "Ja! Ja!" The acoustics really are excellent. "Jaja! Jaja!" the sound echoes round the stone tiers, the sound as of a pack of small hounds baying hot upon the heels of Kultur. "Jaja!"

It was to escape the worst effects of this invasion that this year we rented a private house high above the native quarter. From our ivory tower we could watch them toiling up the steps, the men bare-kneed and wearing a version of the Afrika Korps headgear walking a pace or two in front of the women in tussore suits with the perspiration spreading under their armpits. These

toiling Fraus, their faces innocent of make-up, catch the full fury of sun and sirocco. First their noses—unless they protect them with little shields of white buckram—begin to glow fiery red: then, as their faces too begin to take fire, their noses peel horribly. Up the steps and along the narrow Corso the families advance panting in line astern elbowing the lesser breeds off the pavement. The Sicilians are ready for them. "Man spricht Deutsch" "Hier kann man gut speisen" "Weinstube" read the notices. The Gift Shoppes are filled with Bavarian wood-carvings—grotesque bottlestoppers or nut-crackers or model interiors of Harz Mountain cottages. They also display china groups of Sicilian donkeys in equivocal postures. With this lure sparkling in the sunlight the shopkeepers lurk in their dark little shops and drink coffee and patiently await the invasion.

So, in a different manner, does Giovanni.

Giovanni's antique shop displays a wild confusion of strangely assorted objects: Greek shards, winebottles in the shape of Garibaldi, all the dusty centuries of furniture from ravaged Sicilian churches, birdcages in the shape of fish or early biplanes, primitive ex-voto paintings, Victorian oil-lamps, a bust of Mussolini wearing a tin chamberpot two sizes too small.

Here is the meeting place of the Anglo-Saxon minority. Here we for-gather and exchange the latest gossip and watch Giovanni dealing with the invaders. Occasionally a newcomer to the group innocently picks up a terracotta figurine.

"Fit' century before Chriss!" Giovanni begins automatically. Then he says sharply "Is not for you, that one." He unlocks a drawer. "These



"You just wait till I get hold of you!"



"I now declare this recreation ground open."

are for you. That one is for our friends." He indicates a stout male Nordic figure slung about with expensive cameras and their many accessories who on the other side of the Corso is gazing at some bundles of shepherds' pipes and tambourines painted "*Grüss von Sizilien!*" Pursuing his methodical progress he eventually turns and approaches Giovanni's door. Giovanni darts forward politely.

"Yes! You come in please!" He points out the figurine. "Eight century before Chriss." His customer ignores this gambit and picks up a small china model of a sabot into which someone has glued a white-metal kitten. "*Was kostet dass?*"

"Ten thousand lire," says Giovanni. The customer goes away muttering.

With those of the invaders who pause merely to ask the way he has a different technique. There was a time shortly after his return from a visit to London when he would answer every query with "Sorry! Am stranger here myself."

Now he shows himself at his most courteous and charming. The way to the Post Office? He steps out into the street. His hands, his arms, his shoulders wave detailed instructions, his black eyes sparkle, his teeth gleam whiter than white. Sometimes to their delight he will even walk with them a little way just to make quite sure that they are going in the opposite direction from the Post Office.

One day Giovanni was, typically, doing business with me and simultaneously shouting over his shoulder in nasal mockery "Sure! Sure! Gee-oh-*vah-nee!*" at an American woman who was buying most of the contents of his shop, sending a little boy up to his store to bring fresh supplies, cracking a joke with a friend 100 metres away down the road, producing from his shirt pocket a 5,000-lire note and handing it to a passer-by with no word spoken on either side, when a guttural voice broke in "Where can one buy lemon squeezers?" "Lemon squeezers,

madam?" Giovanni scarcely stopped to think. "I know the best place in town! Look! You go down this Corso a little, up the first flight of steps to the left, turn to the right, up the next flight of steps, turn to the left, up the third flight of steps. You come soon to the Via Circonvallazione. Almost opposite the steps . . ." I started to say something but Giovanni waved me down ". . . almost opposite the steps you see Casa Fiorita. Look like private house but have most wonderful lemon squeezers . . ."

When he returned from seeing her safely on her way, "Really! Giovanni!" I protested. "That's a bit much. Casa Fiorita's our house."

"Yes, I know! But is all right—you not at 'ome."

"All the same, I think . . ." But he was gone before I could finish the sentence. Darting up the Corso he waylaid a little priest.

"Quick!" I heard him say, "bring holy water and disinfect my shop!"

The New Mayhew—



—The Orphan Stenographer



HE had come to London, she told me, some fifteen years previously (her parents then being dead) to take up a position as a shorthand typist in the offices of a firm of string manufacturers in the city. I judged her present age to be thirty-six or thirty-seven. She had a slight cast in one eye and many of her bones were evident.

"Of course, being of a what you might call more of an artistic turn of mind I couldn't settle down at first. At home in Staffordshire I had been keen on hats, and had hopes of Dad opening a shop, but nothing came of it. However, I found the work interesting enough, for there is a lot to be learnt about string, etc., and Mr. Philips was ever so thoughtful with it. He would bring me a posy on Fridays, and gave dictation nice and slow. He was always nicely shaved, and had nice hair for a man, more of a dark honey shade I always told him."

She continued in this position for three months, at the end of which time her services were abruptly dispensed with. She was at a loss to account for this turn of events, for she had been invariably punctual, and had shown herself at all times more than eager to learn. She had also, on four separate occasions, presented Mr. Philips with tickets for recorder recitals.

"I did not allow this unexpected blow [her dismissal] to cow me, but obtained a position, within a fortnight, with a firm that made novelties. I took to the work at once, for with my what you might call artistic background it was a pleasure to prepare letters and invoices about the various products. Yes, they *did* include pottery ashtrays in the shape of animals. I have been with that firm ever since, and at the moment I am really what you might call secretary to Mr. H—, although I am not called that officially. I have two girls under me. They are often being replaced, on account of leaving to get married. Yes, I am always in charge of the collection for the wedding present.

"My wages do not amount to more than eight pounds a week, actually, and

I would not mind, only I happen to know for a fact that Miss D— is getting seven, and she has only been in the office for six months. As a matter of fact she is far too familiar with Mr. H— for my liking. It is so absurd. As though a gentleman in his fifties would be interested in seeing young girls' legs! Fortunately she is engaged, to a dentist with his own horse, or so she says."

She had been residing for some years in a house in one of the northern suburbs of London, where she had a room to herself. I learned that this was quite commodious, and contained a bed as well as the usual comforts of a living-room. In one corner, behind a screen, there were facilities for the cooking of simple meals. She had decorated the screen by pasting upon it coloured portraits of the younger members of the Royal Family taken from popular journals of the day, and several of a cinema actor named Tracy. She was allowed the use of a combined bathroom and toilet, situated on the floor below, at all times when it was not in use by her landlady or members of the landlady's family. The window of her room afforded an uninterrupted view of a private nursing home standing in its own grounds. Her rent was two pounds ten shillings a week. This included the use of bed-linen, cutlery, crockery, and a number of pans.

In reply to my questions she said she found it very exciting to live and work in the capital city. She gave it as her opinion that life in the provinces tended to be humdrum. In London she had the privilege of being close to what she described as the heart of things. She had twice seen the Duchess of Kent in a motor-car, and had once sat immediately in front of a Mr. Kenneth More at the cinema. Mr. More had worn shoes of suède. She had never seen Lady Docker, nor Sir Anthony Eden; but it was thrilling to know that they were not far away.

"I manage to save for a holiday in Cornwall each year, although I am a little afraid of the water; I usually just paddle. Clothes are a problem, but fortunately I am not a slave to fashion. I attend church most Sundays, and always send in my Pools without fail.

I am a member of a mixed choir. I have formed a number of nice friendships, my chief friends being called Amy, Alice and Ruby. Amy and Ruby are also artistically inclined, but Alice, although a good alto, is a bit of a tomboy."

She was, she said, a competent cook, and sometimes on Sunday went to the extent of preparing a small joint of beef, with peas and roast potatoes, and perhaps apple tart to follow. This had been her usual Sunday lunch when she was a young girl. "Although it is rather different," she said, "eating by oneself. We were a large family." In the evenings she would occupy herself by practising the recorder, washing and ironing, embroidering table-mats, reading the works of Trollope and Balchin, or listening to good music on the wireless. She declared herself to be devoted to Grieg.

"I like to keep in touch, and move with the times," she said. "Yes, I gave a little party once, in my flat; but it rained rather, and few people came."

This gentle creature, leading a life of near-poverty and barely able to hide the loneliness of her existence or her fears as to what might be the nature of her end, is typical of many who have, for one misguided reason or another, elected to make London their home. And, reflecting upon her appearance, I could not but compare her plight with the life enjoyed by many young ladies who, descending upon the metropolis without the capacity to grasp even the first lesson of Mr. Pitman's shorthand course, still less to prepare an invoice for pottery ashtrays made in the shape of animals, contrive, by reason of their fashionably sensual expression and the erotic stimulus of their physical measurements, to carve for themselves (without exertion or application of any kind beyond the effort required to get out of bed, and even without the necessity of being either immoral or unscrupulous) niches of the most impregnable luxury.

ALEX ATKINSON

"If you are paunchy . . . under-muscled, physically torpid, and over 17, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee has a scheme which may interest you . . ."

Irish Times

If anything can, in that condition.

Snake, Rabbit, Song

By CHARLES REID

SCENE: *Festspielhaus restaurant, Bayreuth, between Acts 1 and 2, opening night of Wagner Festival. Outside the Volk of Bayreuth, roped off, watch in pelting rain beneath chubby umbrellas and shaving-brush hats while the great and the grand, two by two, file majestically across from the theatre protected by scalloped awnings.*

A: Coming up in the train from Nürnberg there was thunder-and-lightning music by concealed tubas and piccolos, rainbow bridges had been tastefully run from crag to crag by Bavarian State Railways Publicity, and the stationmasters who whistled us off wore spirit-gummed eyebrows and presentation wigs from the Friends of Bayreuth; they were descended to a man from the Third Norn, naughtiest of the lot.

B: The railway line's the only Wagnerian thing left in these parts. Other night, at the *Götterdämmerung* dress rehearsal, the Gibichungs' spear-rally was sung from inside a ribbed concrete saucer, Siegfried's death from the top of a Stilton cheese. Hagen stood to sing "Here sit I on guard," and the Rhinegirls sternly formed three half-way down the basement steps.

A: I wonder what Frau Winifred over there thinks about Bayreuth since her boys took over?

B: Where's she sitting, and what does she look like?

A: Rather to the right of that extraordinary Graf creature who always has an Act of *Tristan* propped against his ice-pail. (Did you know he sings King Marke's monologue nightly through mouthfuls of *kalbfleisch* and blue trout?) Spotted her? Piled gray hair straight from 1918. Cigarette drooping from mouth corner. Strong, clean face, as if its lines had been spoke-shaved.

B: So that's Siegfried Wagner's widow, Richard Wagner's daughter-in-law, Adolf Schickelgrüber's sometime admirer, huh? Why wonder what she thinks. Let's go over and ask her. Let's put it to her bluntly—"Excuse us, Frau Winifred, but does your boys' work, Wieland's especially, make you, as it makes many others, a bit sick?"

A: No good. When Fleet Street men anchor near Frau Winifred she closes her soul and puts sealing wax on its doors. But soft you now, here comes Wieland himself looking not a day under thirty-nine, as why shouldn't he? Hey, Herr Wieland, come join us for a quick cognac. Saw your sister Friedelind at dinner in the Bayerische Hof last night. Her chin is even more like Grandfather Richard's than yours. Tell me, Friedelind wrote a book about the Wagners and Hitler. In it she reports you were exempt from military service

on Hitler's personal order because he wanted to be sure of having the Wagner line perpetuated. That so?

Wieland: Not so. Friedelind's book is a mixture of fact and fiction. All books by women are mixtures of fact and fiction. Come to that, all women are mixtures of fact and fiction, ha, ha!

A (pettishly): Why do people come to Bayreuth so?

Wieland: Because they fear Richard Wagner with a fascinated fear.

B: I see. Case of rabbit and snake. About this new *Meistersinger* of yours. Richard Wagner asked for an alley of old houses. You give him a cobbled plain. He asked for water-meadows and beer tents. You give him a lemon-coloured bullring.

Wieland: The works of Richard Wagner tolerate no change. They are inviolable, sufficient unto themselves. Basically, that is. Which is no reason why in *Parsifal*, for instance, I should go on dressing Kundry, the devil-woman, in a flowered frock with bustle and wasp waist. This is 1956, not 1882. Truth changes. The truth of '56 may be the falsehood of '58. So brace yourselves.

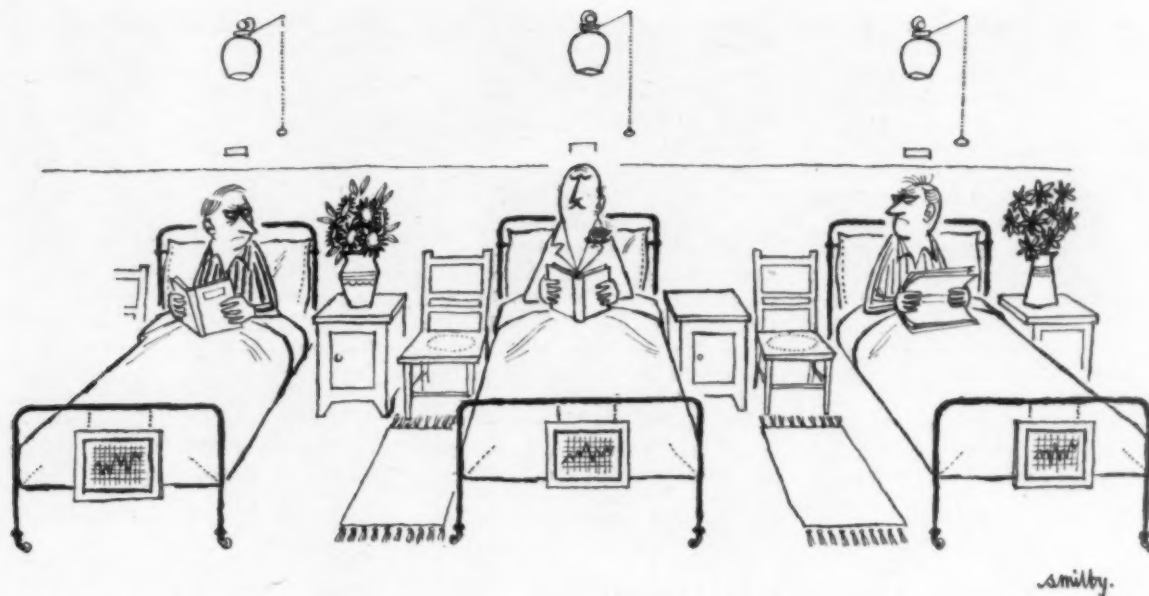
A: You know, don't you, that your *Meistersinger* will make you hated?

Wieland: I hope so. They begin by hating. They end by copying. And they copy badly. My *Ring* is being imitated all over Europe. You can see half my *Parsifal* in New York. The other half is nobody's business. What's wrong with a little hatred? My *Fidelio* was booed at the Paris Opera. Not as violently as the same theatre booed *Tannhäuser* ninety-five years earlier. But usefully. It was very nice. An honour. People were slapping each other's faces in the gallery. The police had to intervene. But I must fly.

Fanfares call us back to the theatre. We inch our way over from the restaurant two by two, majestically. Rain drums on the awnings as before. The Volk are still there behind barriers, soaked, respectful. They don't quite know what it's all about. But, like any other rabbit, they know a snake when they see one . . . At the finish Wieland's new *Meistersinger* gets a derisive whistle or two, with counter cheers. Everybody goes home happy.



"I'd gladly lend you ten piastres, but unfortunately my assets are all frozen in London and New York."



Squealerism

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

AFTER Napoleon had died it was announced to the animals on Animal Farm that they had elected Squealer as their President in his place. The black cockerel now marched in front of Squealer crying "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" and for a time things went on much as they had under the old régime. Squealer in fact made a speech to the animals, telling them that it was to Napoleon that they owed all the prosperity of the Farm and that never would he deviate from any of the policies of Napoleon until he should hear a cat bark. There were rumours, it is true, that some of the pigs had said that now all the animals might be allowed to have a little more food, but Squealer said that this was not possible until the second windmill had been built and the dynamos installed in it, and no more was heard of the suggestion.

Then one day it was announced that Mr. Pilkington had invited Squealer to pay him a visit at Foxfield in return for the visit which Mr. Pilkington had paid to Napoleon and that the invitation had been accepted. It was shortly before that return visit that one evening all the pigs sat up late in Jones's house, finishing off the whisky which had been left over after the payment for Boxer's death. Just as the other animals were

going off to sleep, to their surprise Squealer sent out his dogs with an order that they were all to assemble in the barn as he had an important announcement to make to them. Shortly after Squealer himself appeared among them and, standing on two legs, addressed them.

"Animals," he said, "you have been deceived over the last years. When Napoleon was still alive you were told again and again that the Battle of the Windmill was a glorious victory and that for that victory you were indebted to Napoleon. It was all lies. The Battle of the Windmill was no victory. It was a shameful defeat, and the animal who was responsible for that defeat was Napoleon, who had neglected our defences and who allowed the Men to blow up the Windmill. It was Napoleon who allowed our agriculture to fall into decay and was responsible for the freezing of the potatoes. It was Napoleon who, out of a lust for power, compelled us pigs to go on walking on four legs long after we could perfectly well have walked upon two. Animals, who were loyal servants of the Farm, were under Napoleon shamefully done to death on false accusations. It was not true that the sheep urinated in the drinking-pool. It was not true that the

goose stole the ears of corn, nor that the four pigs were in league with Snowball. It was a vile miscarriage of justice by which all these animals suffered. Boxer, that old and faithful servant of the Farm, I must now reveal to you, died no natural death. He was sent to the knacker's. Above all, at the meeting with Mr. Pilkington it was Napoleon who cheated by playing the false ace of spades. The true founder of the Farm [Squealer throughout called it "the Farm"—no one knew whether its name was now "Animal Farm" or "Manor Farm"] was old Major. Napoleon deviated shamefully from the principles of Major, introducing a cult of personality which is quite foreign to the true principles of animalism. It is to those principles that I will now lead you back."

As none of the animals remembered in the least what were the principles of Major, this meant little or nothing to them. What they wondered was why, if Napoleon was as bad as all that, Squealer had always supported him, and why the dogs who had guarded Napoleon were still apparently the guardians of Squealer. Then cynical old Benjamin even asked Squealer why, if all that was true, he had not killed Napoleon; but Squealer ignored the question and the

other animals thought it best to say nothing. Benjamin also asked whether it was Squealer who ruled the dogs or the dogs who ruled Squealer and how long things would go on like this; but the other animals could not very well understand what he was saying.

So Benjamin then asked if in future other animals besides pigs might have a say in the management of the Farm. Squealer said that of course that would be impossible. In fact the animals could not help noticing that though Squealer was very free with the names of animals who had suffered injustice from Napoleon, all those animals were dead and that nothing was said about any recompense to the living. In particular it was far from clear to the

animals what they ought to think about Snowball. Was he a good pig after all? Or were he and Napoleon both bad pigs?

It was shortly after this that Squealer paid his visit of courtesy to Pilkington at Foxwood. What exactly happened at that visit was never quite clear. Squealer and Pilkington had, said the announcement, "a full and frank interchange of views," though no one knew exactly what about, and afterwards they went down together to the "Red Lion" at Willingdon, but that visit was not altogether a success, because the landlord at the "Red Lion" said that they had a rule there against having pigs in the saloon bar. Squealer was very angry, and when he got back to the Farm he

made another speech to the animals, saying that if he were a human being he would be a rich man like Mr. Pilkington and not a pub-keeper. Pigs, he said, had much more in common with rich men than they had with pub-keepers. Also, though he still refused to give any rights on the Farm to any other animals than pigs, he announced that it was a great scandal that Pilkington's cat should have to beg for its saucer of milk from her master. The cat, he said, should have the right of free entry into the dairy and be able to fetch milk directly from the cows whenever she wanted. The truth was that he had not been able to get very much to drink out of Pilkington, and this he found very disappointing.

Except on the Continent

By MARC BOXER

LET'S lay off the newspapers for a bit and have a look at this nice fashion magazine for Men, *Man About Town*. You'll recognize this particular issue by the cover: a photograph of Jimmy Edwards *manqué* in a daring *décolleté* shawl-collar dinner-jacket, holding up an umbrella; and committing something of a sartorial solecism by sporting a boater.

If I were you I'd skip, for the time being at any rate, the articles devoted to the new slim look and so on, and jump straight into a very interesting article on page 23. To state the situation briefly, this article outlines, in the popular

do-it-yourself style, how to take out a girl.

Much of it is of course pure routine stuff, rather in the nature of a refresher course: "The man gets out of the taxi first. He does so in order to help the lady out. Then he can surrender her to the Doorman . . ." Some men-about-town I know will resent this surrender clause, but will not quarrel with the next moves:

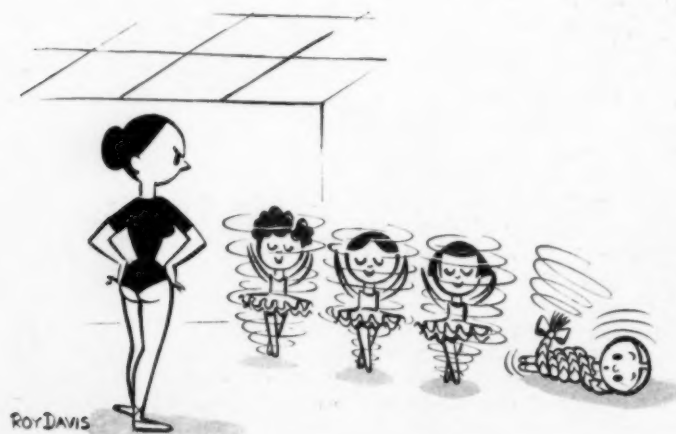
"When you get to the restaurant the man leans forward to hold the door open for the lady. On entering, the lady goes first but the man should be very close . . . When the waiter leads the

way to the table the man should follow the lady . . . On leaving the table the lady again leads the way. The man follows closely . . ." By following closely like this the man is making it clear that he does not intend to surrender the lady to the waiter if he can help it.

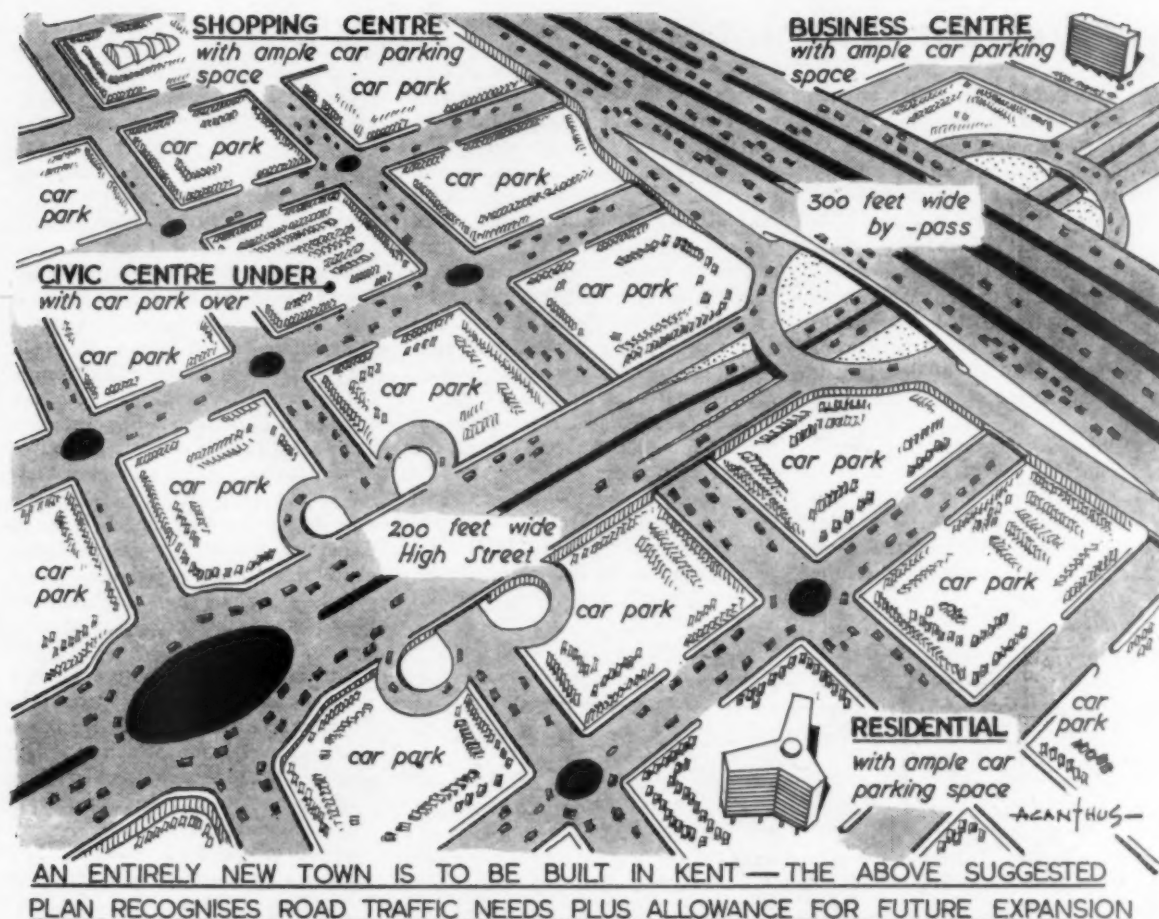
There are, however, one or two restrictive practices which have several of us men-about-town seriously worried. Like: "Force yourself to remember the little niceties of a bunch of flowers." If you don't, perhaps the doorman will.

"Strictly speaking you should face one another across the table for two. If it is necessary from the table layout to sit next to each other, then the man should sit on the left of the lady. Except on the Continent, where, for some reason or other the tradition is that the man sits on the right of the girl." Just as well to know, any way. But, and I put forward the suggestion with some humility, I'm rather dubious about this. And it so happens only the other night I happened to be sitting not an olive's-throw from old Billy Wallace, and there he was, with a lady, sitting not opposite but right *next* to her; and on her *right*. Still, I suppose old Billy Wallace can make his own rules as he goes along.

"The first thing you do," to get back to the instructions, "is to spread your serviette on your knees." Serviettes are



Rod Davis



coming back. It's always like that with this U business; just as you think you've caught up you have to start all over again. "Next thing [good Anne Driver stuff this] is to transfer your small bread knife from inside right position on the cutlery line to outside left on the centre of your bread plate. You are now ready for anything. Fish bones may be taken out of the mouth with the ends of the fingers." Not the nutcrackers, anyway.

Well, I don't want to spoil the dénouement for you men, but there's a rather nasty snag in the tail, namely, "Take our advice and don't even try to kiss her the first time." The italics are, of course, mine. The suggestion is that you'll get much further next time. Except on the Continent where, for some reason or other, the tradition is the other way round.

Escapist

WHEN Sir Anthony spoke to the nation,
On the Home, I.T.A. and TV,
A tiny sub-section
In reflex rejection
Adjusted the knob in another direction:
That tiny sub-section was me.

When Sir Anthony spoke to the nation
(Though his audience ratings were high)
There were some who preferred
To tune in to the Third,
But as canned Frescobaldi was all that they heard
I wasn't among them, not I.

When Sir Anthony spoke to the nation,
In his TV and radio bid,
I attempted to stick it,
But the knob *made* me flick it . . .
And there was the Light with the rest of the cricket:
I'm sorry. But that's what I did.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

Fashion for Fashion's Sake

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

FASHION is a decorative art; its only serious purpose is frivolity.

When such banalities as clothing the body come into it, then fashion is in a decline. How disturbing, then, to find so many of the Paris Autumn Collections described as wearable. Why, they make wearable clothes in London; in Paris we look for fashion. We want to be shocked, or transported. We want to talk of decadence, or of renaissance; of the decline and fall of one designer, or the rise and shine of a new creative star.

Instead, there was vague talk of a *malaise* in the *Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*: de Givenchy and Balenciaga (now the Givenchiaga axis) refusing to give press shows until the end of the month, the better to preserve the

secrecy of their collections; Manguin and Pierre Cardin resigning from the syndicate for exactly the opposite reason—so that photographs and drawings of their collections could be published immediately. Again, there was talk of the sad trend towards ready-to-wear, and of the death of two *couture* houses. Paquin-Worth, the oldest of all Parisian dress houses, and Pierre Clarence, one of the youngest, join the list of celebrated disappearances: Lelong, Piquet, Molyneux, Rochas, Schiaparelli.

The one celebrated reappearance of the last few years, that of Chanel, has proved even more disturbing to the votaries of pure fashion. That Chanel can continue in her style of the nineteen-thirties shows there are *couturier* customers who want clothes,

not fashion. Casual, easy-fitting, simple without severity's elegance, these jersey suits, jumper suits, little black woollen frocks, wispy black lace frocks, are period pieces. To the connoisseur of bygones, her collections have a weird fascination. The salon just as ever: marble-topped tables supported by gilt Bacchi; artificial camellias, Japanese screens, beige carpet, mannequins carrying cardboard numbers as in those old *thé dansant* dress parades. The mannequins themselves, although young, are evocatively in period . . . like characters from Michael Arlen's short stories, or heroines from a Gilbert Frankau best-seller. Theirs is a more sterile silhouette than that of the Dior models, some of whom have the touching charm of little child-brides, undeveloped but with a promise—a budding promise, deliciously hinted at in the *décolletée* evening dresses.

Dior is still King of Couture; but it is a less dictatorial Dior, more constitutional and democratic. He introduces a small group of almost ankle-length daytime dresses, as who should say "What about these? Take them or leave them." With his New Look of 1947 he told us to take it. And we took it. Two years ago he decreed the H-line, and we took that. Then the A-line; that, too, we took. But in this Autumn Collection, although emphasizing a belted natural waist-line, short peg-top skirts, and a wrapped-up look, he compromises with something for everyone; something for every Department Buyer from New York, Brisbane, Holland, Belgium, and the North of England. These somethings are perfectly executed, with the inimitable touch of the master—but very wearable.

In contrast, the Jacques Fath collection is theatrical, just a little bit *Folies Couture*. Dramatic cocktail dresses, such as the red faille with one great bow from bosom to hem, cannot be damned as wearable. Indeed Madame Fath herself did not wear anything so emphatic for her Reception at Maxim's a few days later. This was an occasion on which to see *couture* clothes, not on model girls but owner-occupied. But Madame Fath's dress was pale blue, *jeune fille*, simply belted, simply pleated, with simple neckline—simply



"They must have some jolly weird establishments if Nasser is pegged down to Colonel."

sweet. It was being rumoured around the room that Marlene Dietrich had ordered twelve Fath hats. We commend her taste, for the hats, as always, are the exquisites of the Fath collection. But Madame herself, for the champagne hour of seven o'clock, was hatless: lacking osprey, egret, or bird of paradise; without millinery sequins, tulle, ermine, violets, or velvet.

It was an Anglo-Parisienne who set an individual style: a head-dress of stiff black tulle, veiling the forehead and finishing as a quiff nine inches high on the top of her head. A cocktail confection, one would call it, if it had not been worn to the dress shows morning and afternoon, to Pierre Cardin at five o'clock, to Maxim's. And after Maxim's to Jean Dessès' opening. We lost track of it after midnight, but to be sure it supped and danced. Next morning, at 8.45, it appeared at Annie Blatt's breakfast presentation; still fresh and perky, you would never suppose it was slept in.

The same resilience was shown by the Americans, who bobbed up brightly to meet each sweltering day. In the past ten days they have been in Dublin, London, Rome, Florence, London again, and now Paris. Such wear and tear . . . and yet they never seem worn or torn; with their love of pâtisserie and brand new pills, their tales of major operations fitted in between seasons, their appetites ("My idea of dieting is not having a third helping") and their gruesome methods of correcting their metabolism. Those two, for instance, at midday in the Plaza Athene, are eating raw steaks and drinking Bloody Marys (tomato juice, vodka, and Worcestershire sauce). A plump little furrier (how *wrong* of him to be bald) sits down and pulls two golden ball-point pens from his waistcoat, offering them as though cigars. "I've got the cutest little hat up in my suite, made of fifteen different furs—all the furs I handle. Either of you girls care to come up and see it?" Neither of them cares; but they both just love their ball-point pens.

The little furrier is on the right lines, however, for it is the fur hat which will give the look of this coming season. Shaped as a fez, Cossack, shako, turban, busby, or squashed concertina, these hats are high and straight, and not very easy to wear. It almost seems that now clothes are so wearable, hats must



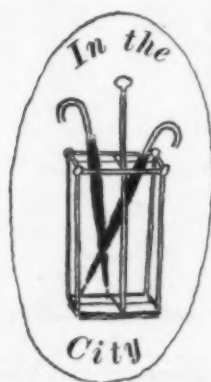
provide the touch of nonsense, the rumour of romance, that fashion should bestow. Demonstrably it was so with the lovely hats of this unworthy summer. But there were two Paris dress collections which restored one's faith in fashion, pure and not simple. That designed by Castillo for Jeanne Lanvin, with its rich regardlessness and consistency of colour, cut, and line; and the collection of Pierre Balmain.

Balmain is a fearless sentimentalist. He sees the lady of 1957 as the ladies of Gabriele d'Annunzio, painted by Boldini or Gandara, who trailed their hopelessness through shady Florentine groves, followed by slender greyhounds. A light picks out a Boldini portrait on the stairs, and in the salon all is babel and bustle, as it should be before the opening of a great collection. The vendeuses guard the entrance, the workroom hands rush to and fro carrying what seem to be corpses, wrapped in muslin shrouds; a milliner follows with a guillotined head—a wooden hat block. Monsieur

Racine keeps coming in with a *brown paper parcel*.

And when the presentation starts there is a brilliant profligacy of fur, brocade, embroidery, jewels. Cloaks trail the ground, a satin gown is strewn with bows of fur from breast to hem—a litter of mink kits, the strongest at the bottom. An entirely new cut of sleeve and shoulder carries right through the collection, giving the wearer a different attitude, drooping slightly forward—a languid look. This is the key to the whole collection. More: it gives a sudden meaning to Dior's *demi-longueurs*; to Heim's hobble sheaths and willow droop; to chiffon blouses, peg-top skirts, capes, fur trimmings. They all belong to a period, to that little bijou, boudoir period of 1910 to 1914; the period of Shaw's *Eliza Doolittle*, now born again in *My Fair Lady*, the current belle of New York. It is at such moments, when the pieces suddenly fall into place, that the fascination of fashion is felt—of fashion for fashion's sake.





Seven-Year Itch

NOT long before he slipped out of the hot seat at the Exchequer Mr. Butler told us that we could double our standard of living within a quarter of a century—certainly by 1984. Had he said *cost* of living no one would have doubted his words, and those of us who have a vested interest in the savings movement might well have found solace in his moderation. By recent standards a mere doubling of the cost of living in twenty-five years is chicken feed to the inflationists. Since 1938 prices have trebled: since 1945 they have risen by some seventy per cent, and the last ten years have been the most inflationary period of peace in our economic history.

The most discouraging aspect of inflation is its unpredictableness. If we knew with absolute certainty that £100 saved now would be worth only £50 in purchasing power by 1976 we could accept our misery with equanimity. We could budget for our old age with confidence. The more prudent would struggle to double their current sacrifice and would prepare themselves physically and mentally for the lean years ahead. Drinkers and smokers would taper off their addiction to alcohol and nicotine and take to sucking straws, motorists would begin to step up their consumption of shoe-leather, children would be married off before the cost of a wedding breakfast became prohibitive, and the old armchair would be made ready in the glare of the telly. If the Government were in a position to come clean about our financial future the National Savings Committee could make its advertisements extremely attractive . . .

THEY'RE NEW

BEST VALUE IN 40 YEARS

£450 becomes £300 in 20 years.

Safeguard your future with
UMPTENTH ISSUE SAVINGS CERTS.

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing what lies ahead and round the bend, and savers reach for security like dogs snapping at their own tails. Great efforts are now being made to make prices mark time. Nationalized fuel and transport have signed the pledge for a year, and among other price truce leaders are I.C.I., Imperial Tobacco, Distillers, W. & A. Gilbey, De la Rue, Gillette, W. Lusty & Son (Lloyd Loom furniture) and Windolite. So far so good. But the hard blows of economic reality cannot be countered by psychological warfare. Unless labour falls into line and agrees to a standstill for wages nothing can prevent the truce being broken.

Meanwhile small savers are being wooed as never before by the building societies and the N.S. Committee. The societies now offer a minimum gross

yield on shares of £6 1s. 9d. per cent., and the tenth series of Savings Certificates is designed to produce a gross return of £7 5s. 11d. per cent compound. Units can be bought at 15s., the maximum holding is 600, and there will be few surtax payers, one imagines, who will not struggle to accumulate the necessary £450.

The new S.C. terms are undoubtedly bright—and especially so at a time when industrial shares generally are behaving rather badly. But the full advantage from these certificates can be earned only by submitting to a seven-year itch. By 1963 we may be half-way to Mr. Butler's Utopia, or we may be up the creek.

In his present mood the small investor is more likely to put his shirt on "Ernie" and Mac the Knife's Premium Bonds. MAMMON

* * *



Beer, 1d. per pint

LIKE fields of prawns the ears of barley ripen. Several fields have been cut already. It looks as if the grain will make a good malting sample. But not all of our barley will go to the brewers. I shall make some more beer again on the premises.

Of course fifty years ago most farms brewed their own ale or made their own cider. I believe a Customs and Excise concession still exists allowing cottagers whose rent is under five shillings a week to brew a certain amount free of any duty. Or perhaps that little liberty has got lost in our March towards Freedom? At any rate, the brewing gear in a barn on my farm, once cleared of a few broody hens, was soon made serviceable again.

First, we take a couple of bushels of barley and spread it on the barn floor, then we spray water on to it. After a

couple of days the grain swells and starts to shoot. The process of germination is arrested by turning the grain till it dries out. This makes the malt—or of course it's easy enough to buy that from any merchant. However you obtain the malt, put two bushels of it into the bottom of a wooden barrel, cover it with thirty gallons of water, and let it stand for a couple of days. Then drain the water off and refill the barrel with water. Now put the first thirty gallons into saucepans, cauldrons, kettles or dust-bins, and after adding a couple of pounds of hops, boil gently for eight hours, by which time about ten gallons have evaporated. When it is cool add two ounces of yeast and leave it uncorked in a barrel.

Repeat this process with the second lot of water which has been poured on to the malt. Thus you obtain forty gallons of beer from two bushels of malt, which, costing about 35s., makes the beer work out at a little more than a penny a pint.

I should warn would-be brewers that the first twenty gallons is stronger than the second lot. In Devonshire it is called barley wine, elsewhere it is known as Audit Ale. It has the kick of a Dublin cart-horse. The second brewing produces beer which is comparatively mild, that is to say about twice as strong as the stuff one can buy.

There can be only one explanation why people have stopped brewing their own beer: if it isn't temperance it's sloth. RONALD DUNCAN



BOOKING OFFICE

Firbank

Valmouth. Ronald Firbank. With illustrations by Philippe Jullian. Duckworth, 21/-

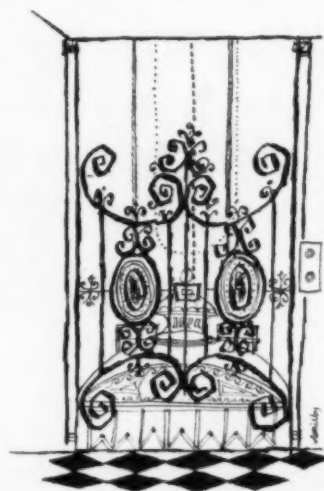
THE case of Ronald Firbank (1886-1926) is a very curious one. A rich eccentric and amateur of writing, he published in his lifetime, at his own expense, about eight novels, regarded by his friends as amusing trifles, but with a real originality of their own. The critics and the general public, in so far as they came across these novels when they first appeared, were inclined to look upon them as little better than ravings. Beautifully produced, and usually illustrated with a drawing or two by one of the distinguished artists of the period, these books soon joined the First Edition market, so that even towards the end of Firbank's own life some of them must have been already comparatively hard to get hold of.

There was a growing feeling after his death that they should be republished; but this feeling was among a small group of Firbank enthusiasts and did not communicate itself to publishers until Messrs. Duckworth (on whom I myself can claim to have exerted some slight pressure to ascertain the position of Firbank's "rights") discovered that he had bequeathed a fund to guarantee a reissue of his works. Even then, in 1929, they only risked a finely produced edition in five volumes limited to one hundred copies. This was heavily over-subscribed; and in due course, after this hopeful sign, the Firbank novels were produced in cheap editions.

Since those days further editions have appeared, and by now the tone of reviewers towards Firbank has very much altered. Indeed the American critic, Mr. Edmund Wilson, wrote an article not long ago hailing Firbank as perhaps the most important English writer of his period. We now find here a new illustrated edition of *Valmouth*, presumably the first of a series of

illustrated Firbank novels. In other words Firbank has flourished in a small but vigorous manner for a matter of twenty-five years or more; quite an achievement for any writer, especially one who could never hope to appeal to a really large public.

The fact is there is nothing else quite like them. Deriving from the 'nineties,



and stamped heavily with their own period, the 'twenties, they are little more than bursts of description and dialogue linked together. There is no shape, no story and only a vague suggestion of character. There are sudden crepitations of nervous wit, *double entendres*—sometimes extremely funny, sometimes less funny—fantastic ideas, and incredible situations. For the professional writer there are also all kinds of ingenious innovations in the manner of expressing how people look and talk; for the literary idler, the books can be opened at any page and closed again as soon as they have given sufficient entertainment. They make no demands whatever.

Valmouth is one of the best (the rest

are *The Flower Beneath the Foot*, *Prancing Nigger*, *Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli*, *Caprice*, *Vainglory* and *Inclinations*) and Mr. Philippe Jullian's illustrations strike just the right note. In fact one can hardly imagine Firbank more appropriately illustrated, and I have, I think, never seen Mr. Jullian more at home with a book.

"Lady Parvula cooed, half-fluttered. In a time-corroded mirror she could see herself very frail, and small, and piquant in its silver-sheeted depth.

"To be continually beautiful, like *you*, dear," her hostess said. "How I wish I could . . ."

"Yet I date my old age," Lady Parvula replied, "from the day I took the lift first at the Uffizi!"

Like so many innovators, Firbank has played such a part in the way dialogue is now written that his method no longer seems unusual. Even a detective story gets you along now in that kind of way; while almost every satirical writer of to-day shows signs of Firbank influence, though perhaps not always necessarily acquired direct from Firbank himself.

Does one read them with the old zest? I was not sure that I felt quite as I used; although certainly nothing could be more effective than the opening page of *Valmouth*. The point about them is of course that life *is* at times very exotic and strange. They do not set out to convey "realism," whatever that may be, but to pin down those exceptional, extraordinary sights and sounds that are always to be found—for those with eyes to see and ears to hear them—at parties, *tête-à-têtes* or in the streets. It is "realism" at another level.

ANTHONY POWELL

Heavily Coated

Victor and the Vanquished. P. B. Abercrombie. Gollancz, 12/6

In a handbag boarding-house live various defeated characters, including the dim mistress of a slick adventurer in the

antique business, and a refugee Hungarian sculptor—old, wise, kindly, humorous and sickly. The adventurer interests two rich women in an antique shop and in selling statuettes made by the dear old refugee. The scheme falls through, because the adventurer fails in his handling of the rich women. The old pet of a whimsical mid-European dies murmuring the name of the dim mistress, and the defeated stay that way.

Somewhere inside this drivel is quite a different book, or part of one, a hard, unexpected dissection of the relations of the adventurer and the two women, written from a curious angle and with an individual flavour. Some scenes in the novel are worth wading towards through their isolating treacle; but Miss Abercrombie, like Miss Lessing the other day, makes me feel that no woman should be allowed to write about any Central European of over thirty.

R. G. G. P.

The Crucible. Arthur Miller. Cresset Press, 12/6

Plays of the Year. Volume 13. Chosen by J. C. Trewin. Elek, 18/-

London and Paris have been prepared to take *The Crucible* at its face value as a fine tragedy, but American critics were quick to point out the resemblance between the Salem witch-hunt of 1692 and the McCarthy investigations; and now the notes which Mr. Miller has added to his text make it clear that he had this similarity in mind, although McCarthy is not mentioned. Drawing on contemporary sources, his commentary helps towards a better understanding of the characters and their bleak background. *The Crucible* reads as well as it acts, which is saying much.

In an amusing essay Mr. Trewin introduces his current four selections. Murder colours three. *The Ermine* was Anouilh's first important play, and full of indications for his future work. *The Whole Truth and Dead on Nine* are both neat thrillers, while the fourth, innocent of crime, is *Small Hotel*, a shrewd observation of dining-room life from a waiter's angle. As usual, a balanced collection.

E. O. D. K.

The Book of Poisons. Gustav Schenk. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 18/-

Plainly no short review can do justice to the fascinating information and immense amount of research contained in the 210 pages of Herr Schenk's comprehensive study, ably translated by Michael Bullock; an Outline of Toxicology (9 pages) is also appended, and the index alone may give the general reader some idea of what to expect: selecting from it at random, we find "Hellebore, stinking"; "Mohammedans, use of hashish by" (an entire chapter is devoted to this drug and its attendant legends); "Monobromisovalerianylurea" (a bromine derivative, mildly hypnotic and sedative); "Mussels"; "Potassium cyanide

(harmless to barn owl)"; "Spotted hemlock (goats can eat)"; "Suicide, various means of"; "Tobacco eyes"; and "Witches' salve." E605, "the fashionable poison of 1954" (as employed by Christina Lehmann, the "Witch of Worms") is also included; and another modish note is struck by the author's account of his reactions to mescaline. The toxic effects of tea, it is nice to know, are more lasting than those of coffee; and two centuries before our national tea-cult began "the beverage was the object of religious veneration" among the Japanese "Teaists." . . . A volume invaluable to the detective-story writer (or addict) but not suitable as a gift to the homicidally inclined.

J. M.-R.

A Most Contagious Game. Samuel Grafton. Rupert Hart-Davis, 12/6

Despite the jacket and the blurb, this novel is a serious discussion of crime, not primarily an entertainment, though its surface is entertaining. A reporter is sent to make contact with the New York underworld and finds himself changing until he accepts it as normality. Mr. Grafton is good on the criminal attitude to time and to the personal rights of associates. I have never met such a convincing account of the appeal of the texture of criminal life, including a wonderful passage about domesticity in a criminal family. Mr. Grafton sees crime as essentially separation, for some theologians the essence of sin: the return to the non-criminal world is described as "an act of continuity." The pursuing cop, who fails and is broken and is sought out by the hero with his confession, perhaps echoes *Crime and Punishment*.

The writing varies from the ingeniously descriptive and amusingly sardonic to the mushily uplifting, though, like Maxwell Anderson or O'Neill or Odets, Mr. Grafton does not lose his dramatic tautness between the purple patches. As often in serious American writing, the relations of the sexes is the weakest part.

R. G. G. P.

Up Jenkins! Ronald Hingley. Longmans, 12/6

The idea of an England divided by Civil War is not altogether original; and, among several precursors of this first novel, Mr. Shamus Frazer's *Accorned Hog* and *A Shroud as well as a Shirt*, which also adopted a satirical attitude towards aspects of Totalitarianism, were on the whole more successfully realized. Mr. Hingley nevertheless scores a few direct hits—notably in his conception of Professor Boleslav Unkraut, a figure who has many parallels in the contemporary literary world, and who owes his appointment at the University of York to the fact that he cannot express himself in correct English. But the strain of being funny about life in a Police State finally proves too much for the author, and the



J. M.-R.

last sequences degenerate hopelessly into melodrama, with the schoolmaster-hero hysterically screaming Lyceum epithets at his tormentors. On the other hand, Mr. Hingley's deliberate reversal of the grim Orwellian surprise-ending (his book actually contains an outwardly cold and prim young woman named Julia) is, though obviously contrived, less insulting to the intelligence than the optimistic conclusion recently tacked on to the film version of 1984.

J. M.-R.

Enchanting Bellamy. Cyril Hughes. Hartmann. Heinemann, 25/-

"Enchanting Bellamy," that romantic Scotch poet John Cunningham apostrophized the object of his admiration, yet signally failed to convey the nature of her charms. Her latest admirer, Mr. Cyril Hughes Hartmann, is more entertaining though hardly more successful in his search for the secret of the enchantment wielded by the illegitimate daughter of that singularly flamboyant Field-Marshal and Ambassador to Russia, James O'Hara, Lord Tyravley, and an obscure actress. Warmhearted, generous to a fault, spiritedly witty, George Anne Bellamy was neither a great beauty nor a great actress. Enchanting nevertheless she undoubtedly was to packed houses at Drury Lane and Covent Garden and also to her countless admirers, among whom were men not only of fashion but of ability, wit and genius such as Henry Fox, Chesterfield, Dr. Johnson, James Quin, David Hume and Byron, who characteristically attempted to abduct her.

I. F. D. M.

AT THE PLAY



The Seagull (SAVILLE)
The Long Echo (ST. JAMES'S)
Doctor in the House
(VICTORIA PALACE)

DOES anyone know what *The Seagull* is about? Its dramatis personae include two writers and two actresses, so it may be about the stresses of the artistic life; the lay, or theatre-

audience public is mystifyingly indulgent towards the tantrums of the creative temperament masquerading as entertainment. But if it is about artists, where does the title come in? The idly murdered seagull is heavily underlined as a symbol of the innocent Nina's ruination by man-of-the-world Trigorin. Perhaps it is about Nina? If so, why is its climax Konstantin's suicide?

It could just be variations on the theme of unrequited love. Nearly everyone in the play suffers from this. Masha loves Konstantin, Konstantin loves Nina, Nina loves Trigorin, Medvedenko loves Masha . . . Paulina Shamrayev even loves Dr. Dorn, if five lines of their dialogue in act two are anything to go by. It seems not impossible, reflecting on this last couple, that Chekov really meant to write about their lifelong intrigue, and that their short exchanges are vestigial remains of a play that turned out otherwise. Paulina's daughter says to the doctor "I don't care for my father . . . but I feel with all my heart that you are very near to me . . ." He may have been her father after all, though if so that is all the hint that we get. It could be Masha's story—of marriage as counter-irritant to a hopeless love. Or Irina Arkadina's—of her selfishness, pride and

shameless exploitation of beauty and talent. Perhaps some future Hollywood adaptation offers the only hope of clarification: films must prune away narrative irrelevancies, or people simply don't know where they are.

What is clear about the play, and particularly so in the Saville production, is that it offers opportunities for at least six first-rate acting performances (could that be the point?). Diana Wynyard's Irina is as sharp, lovely and glittering as an icicle, if over-suggestive of an icicle's inner nothingness; we find it hard to believe what affectionate things are said about her by other characters. George Relph makes an amiable old ninny of Sorin, blindly lamenting a life-time's lack of the emotional opportunities which are making life hell for all the others. Lyndon Brook gives the hapless Konstantin a pale fire of frustration and a palpitating sensibility almost hurtful to see. Upon the Nina of Perlita Neilson, dewy and fragile, we look as one looks on a child asleep, with a pang for its sorrows to come; though when we re-encounter her after the two years between acts three and four the sorrows heaped on her in that time have not, perhaps, scarred her as they should. The prize of the evening goes to the Trigorin

of Hugh Williams; vain, weak, passionate enough, weary of a literary success he mistrusts, his blaze of youthful creation now dimmed to a snug, profitable glow, this is a conception hard to fault. Michael Macowan's direction neatly co-ordinates the play's patterns into a design, and imposes that cohesion which must so often elude a mere reader of the text.

At the St. James's, Murray Macdonald has been less successful in disciplining the overtones of *The Long Echo*, largely because so many of them are out of his control before the curtain rises. Lesley Storm essays to show what goes on behind the domestic scenes in a household abandoned by a renegade diplomat—the Fay Edwards of the play can only be the Melinda Maclean of the headlines. The proposition is barely practical. A playwright with most of his plot forced on him by universally known facts is heavily inhibited; every time his imagination takes flight reality looses off and shoots it down. All Miss Storm has managed is a theory on the private unknown behind the public known, which is dull and obvious except for suspense provided by the wifely dilemma whether or not to join the husband. Joyce Redman does her admirable best in a part so brave, bright-eyed and stiff-upper-lipped that we never really know what the wife is feeling until the dénouement—and even then we don't, because it cheats us by taking place off stage.

The Victoria Palace is at present an operating theatre, where surgeon Ted Willis carves up Richard Gordon's *Doctor in the House*, leaving the patient feverish and suffering from shock. The adaptation is episodic, with arbitrary jumps in time, but is to some degree redeemed by abundant elementary fun and frightening high spirits. Alan White's glinting vivacity as Tony Grimsdyke could ill be spared from a patchy cast.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Ustinov (as playwright) is at his rare best with *Romanoff and Juliet* (Piccadilly—30/5/56); whodunitophiles will enjoy *Night of the Fourth* (Westminster—11/7/56); for a family outing, *Salad Days* is still going (Vaudeville—18/8/54).

J. B. BOOTHROYD



[The Seagull]

Peter Sorin—GEORGE RELPH

Konstantin—LYNDON BROOK

Irina Arkadina—DIANA WYNWARD



AT THE BALLET

Les Ballets Africains
(PALACE)

IN African villages, says Keita Fodéba, whose immensely vigorous company is in London again, "no one dances for his neighbour, everyone dances for himself and learns to dance and sing in the same way as he learns to speak."

The vitality and spontaneity of the

dancing—"ballet" is a misnomer—and its wonderful muscular control, and above all, its intoxicating rhythm are such that it is easy to believe that they have lost nothing of their authentic fire in being transplanted from native village to London stage. Therein may be detected the art of Mr. Fodéba, for within the conventions of the theatre and a running-order unsurpassed in speed by any West End revue he presents a spectacle as seemingly uninhibited as can be imagined. Although on the home ground a dance can, I understand, last a whole night without wearying anyone, at the Palace the dancers are required to reach their various culminating frenzies in the space of a few minutes.

Of the twenty-nine items—some new to London—half are miniature dramas based mainly on folk themes and communal rituals accompanied by drumming of a complexity too subtle for European appreciation. Alternating relief is provided by the gentle harp-like music of the *cora* and the polished singing of Kandia and others. C. B. MORTLOCK



AT THE PICTURES

The Ambassador's Daughter
Le Défroqué

AT every turn *The Ambassador's Daughter* (Director: Norman Krasna) makes one think of the light comedy films of the early and middle nineteen-thirties, which at the time seemed—and indeed were—so good. There is plenty of good in this too, and perhaps with a new generation of moviegoers it will be an unqualified success; but people with memories of twenty years ago may, I think, find its success qualified by a feeling of having been here before.

This feeling will be strengthened by the presence in the cast of Myrna Loy, Adolphe Menjou, Edward Arnold and Francis Lederer, even though these names are lower on the list than they would have been once. But the story itself—down to the quite typical detail that the girl, having got herself engaged to one of those foreign princes, inevitably throws him over for a red-blooded young American—is redolent of the old conventions throughout.

Though in the old days it was never, of course, done on this scale. This is in CinemaScope and Technicolor, with the help of which we get a conducted tour of the sights of Paris in the spring, one or two Dior fashion shows, and a performance of the ballet. All these are, to be sure, woven into the story, but the basic reason for their inclusion is as obvious as if they were quite self-contained interpolations.

The plot, such as it is, leans very heavily indeed on the dreary old misunderstanding-routine. I lost count of the number of times the girl and the man were separated by misunderstandings



Ambassador Fiske—EDWARD ARNOLD

Senator Cartwright—ADOLPHE MENJOU

Prince Nicholas Obelski—FRANCIS LEDERER

and reunited by explanations. She (Olivia de Havilland) is the daughter of the U.S. Ambassador in Paris and sets out to prove to a sceptical visiting Senator (Adolphe Menjou) that he is wrong in believing the worst about G.I.s' behaviour with the local girls. The soldier chosen as guinea-pig is Danny (John Forsythe); from then on it is a question of finding enough successive misunderstandings to keep them apart for the necessary length of time. He thinks she (she is pretending to be a local girl) has picked his pocket, and that's put right; she thinks his offer of an air ticket to the U.S. is an attempt to buy her, and that's put right; he thinks he sees her wheedling a present from an elderly admirer, and that's put right; she thinks he contrived an occasion to lure her to his hotel room, and that . . . and so on, and so on. The subsidiary characters are there to help with the explanations.

All the same, the piece is continuously bright and amusing in detail—and not merely in the detail that one recognizes as included for its intrinsic interest. Trivial, empty—but done throughout with satisfying competence, and as plain time-killing entertainment enjoyable enough.

I have to admit that the motives and the springs of action in *Le Défroqué* (Director: Leo Joannon), which are of such deep and passionate interest to all the chief characters, leave me emotionally unmoved. It is a matter of religious conscience, of "saving for the Church," or for that matter simply saving the soul of a man who was once a priest and is now a very vocal anti-clerical. Knowing

this beforehand, and reflecting that it was not up my street at all, I expected to be bored and irritated by the whole affair; but I was held and interested throughout.

Pierre Fresnay appears as the unfrocked priest, whom we first meet in a P.O.W. camp in 1943 where nobody knows about him. He is moved by pity to give absolution (once a priest, always a priest) to the dying padre, and his courage in admitting his history fires a younger prisoner (Pierre Trabaud) to become a priest himself. After the war, the younger man devotes himself to the task of reclaiming the lost soul, and succeeds in death.

As I say, this is all above my head; but sheer film-making skill, and in particular M. Fresnay's performance, give the piece a curious power. Unintelligible and possibly misleading to any but an adult mind, it is naturally enough an "X" film; and yet I should not be surprised to hear that it would grip and, yes, *entertain* plenty of people who completely failed to understand it.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: I still put *Grisbi* or *Honour Among Thieves* (27/6/56) at the top of the list, which also includes John Ford's Western *The Searchers* (8/8/56), Chaplin's classic *The Gold Rush*, and—considerably further down—*Reach for the Sky* (8/7/56) and *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* (1/8/56).

Only one of the new releases was reviewed here—*Land of the Pharaohs* (16/5/56).
RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

Memories are
Made of This

ANYONE who appears regularly on the little screen automatically becomes a national figure. Half a dozen appearances in a panel game are usually enough to secure a theatrical contract; a dozen or more, and the panelist is en route for Hollywood or Rome. Advertisers and their agents watch the telly with sheaves of testimonials on their laps. Secretaries of institutes, clubs, fetes and bazaars are considered failures unless they can win the support—in person—of a reasonably decorative or garrulous performer from the world of TV. I feel sorry for the B.B.C.'s talented weather men; but for some restraining clause in their contract they would surely be able to cash in on their facial familiarity and sponsor such items as sun-tan lotion, rain-coats, iodine lockets and sea-sickness pills.

It is not really surprising that the backstage boys—the men who man the jibs and booms and cameras—so often appear accidentally on the screen: who can blame them for wanting to get into the picture?

But TV fame is a strange halo, an amalgam of serene adoration and turbulent hostility. As his celebrity increases the screen personality is certain to divide viewers into rival camps of lovers and loathers. People like Richard Dimbleby, Lady Barnett, Woodrow Wyatt, Max Wall and Wilfred Pickles have a vast following, but they are also the quarry of an embittered rabble of critics and denigrators.

The stars of old, the lions of the world of literature, sport and the theatre, were



[Hancock's Half-Hour]

HERMIONE BADDELEY TONY HANCOCK SIDNEY JAMES

worshipped from afar and their popularity was almost universal. The stars of TV twinkle before our very eyes, in our own sitting-rooms, and with many facets of their character exposed for our scrutiny. And unless we are completely dazzled by them, their familiarity is likely to breed contempt. Or envy. No one ever said of C. B. Fry or Harry Lauder or Galsworthy "What's he got that I (or Jim here) hasn't?" Spectators, audience and readers never knew enough about their heroes to entertain doubts about them. They were aloof god-like figures incapable of meanness, littleness or failure. But Richard D., Lady B. and Wilfred P. are too much with us to get away with such uncritical acceptance. We judge them not only as performers but as human beings, we take their rough with their smooth and our verdict on them is a matter of setting debits against credits and bringing down the balance.

All of which is intended to explain why

I am happy that Jacqueline Mackenzie is taking a holiday from "Highlight" (B.B.C.) to try her hand at Shaw. I am one of the Friday Reporter's most ardent admirers. For a year she has delighted me with her acid mime and clever caricature. She has evolved a new technique in television reporting, something wonderfully fresh and wholesome, something visually arresting and mentally stimulating. She is not just another girl with a sure-fire party-piece. Her reporting is vivid because it is based on acute observation and a genuine sense of humour, and because—while suggesting so much—it leaves a lot to the imagination. She is one of the few real finds of television.

But a year in the life of a screen personality is a very long time, and for a month or more I have found my affection for Miss Mackenzie cooling. To live up to her growing reputation she has been compelled (it seems to me) to inject more and more straight clowning into her act, and inevitably there has been some loss of subtlety. TV levels down with the unflinching thoroughness that Conservatives attribute to Socialism.

I hope that the Friday Reporter will return before long with her vitality unimpaired, her wit restored to its former precision and her mime back on the economy of understatement.

Half-hours with modern radio and television comics are seldom rewarding, but the Tony Hancock show, written by Alan Simpson and Roy Galton, shows signs from time to time of climbing out of the ruck to become an enjoyable date with moonbeams from the larger lunacy.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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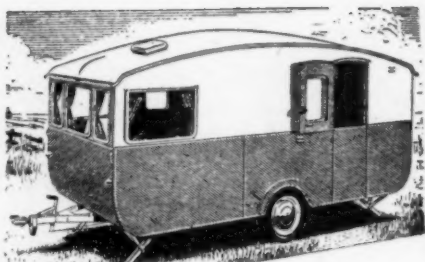
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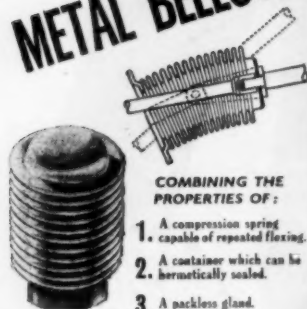
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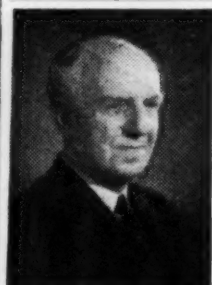
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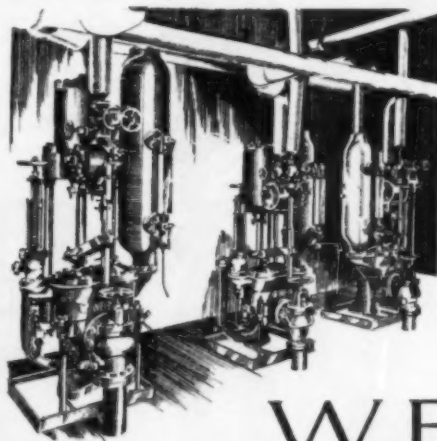
'Item—Wee p'sent fynd & bryng in ffraunces Walwercke to have the libertie of a forayne burges of this towne bye marieng & taking to his wiffe . . . oone of the doughts & heys of John Toxtath decessed and now enjoying that halffe burgage of land as it is buylded, . . . in the Dale of Liv'pole in the tenure & occupacon of David Whitfield, Smith: And for his ingress & fine he paieth p'sentlie ijs vjd. (2s. 6d). to the Comyn Coffe & tresure ower & besyds the Recorders & Srgient fee, with a pot ale &c.'

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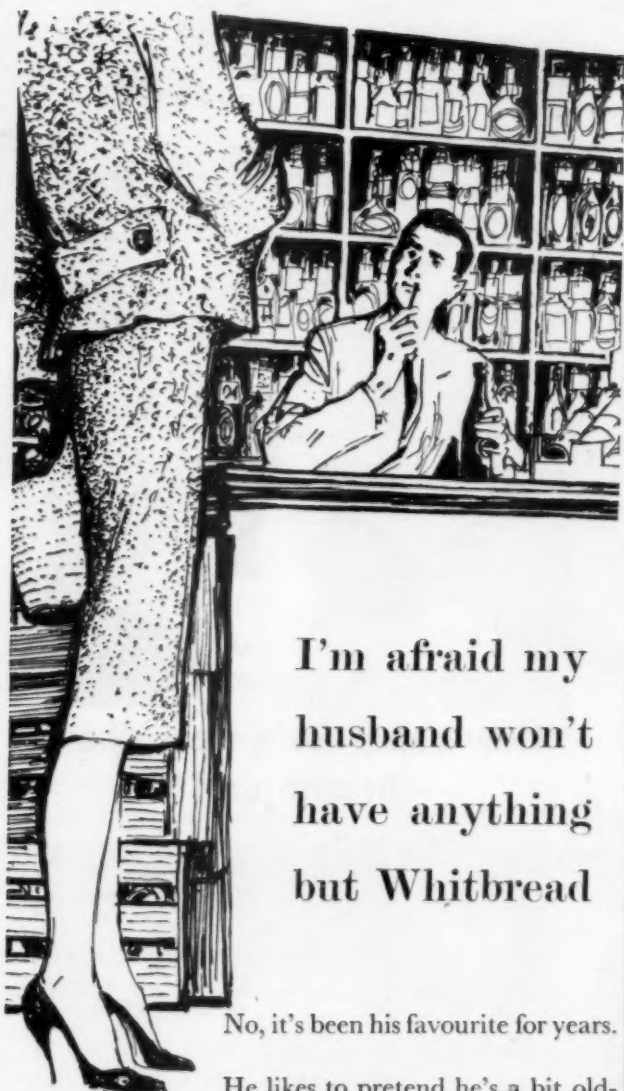
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IMPOVERISHED POET now a "regular" metre-reader

Roland's a high-brow poet. What this means is that editors raise their eyebrows over the stuff he sends in. "Well," I said, "and where are you living now—a muse flat?"

"A garret," sighed Roland. "It's not that inspiration has deserted, only that constipation has joined up. I haven't even the energy to get things down in type."

"Or to get things down a pipe," I said.

"Say that again," commanded Roland.

"Pipe," I said, "as for 'piping native woodnotes wild.' But this one is inside you, and it's thirty feet long. All you eat goes through it, pushed and pulled by your bowel-muscles. But those muscles can't get a grip on much of the soft, starchy food we eat now, so they go on strike."

"How sickening," lisped Roland.

"What will they think of next?"

"Gray's Allergy," I cried. "And the Ode to Melancholy. You've got a caesura in the wrong place and the middle lines won't scan—you're constipated. What you need now," I said, "is bulk."

"Bulk?" worried Roland. "Do I take it?"

"You do not," I said, "you eat it for breakfast. Its poetic name is Kellogg's All-Bran. Just you eat a little every morning. It gives those muscles bulk to go to work on—and keeps you 'regular.'"



Away crawled Roland like a pathetic fallacy. But when I saw him next, lo, meet the world record-holder for the 1500 metres. "Hail to thee, blithe spirit," I greeted him. "Feeling better?"

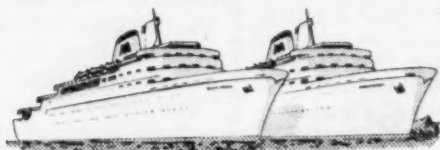
"Indeed I am," quoth Roland. "I feel as bouncy as sprung rhythm. Took only four days to make me 'regular,' that marvellous All-Bran. Been trying to find a rhyme for it."

"Let's be really modern," I said. "What about 'regularity'?"

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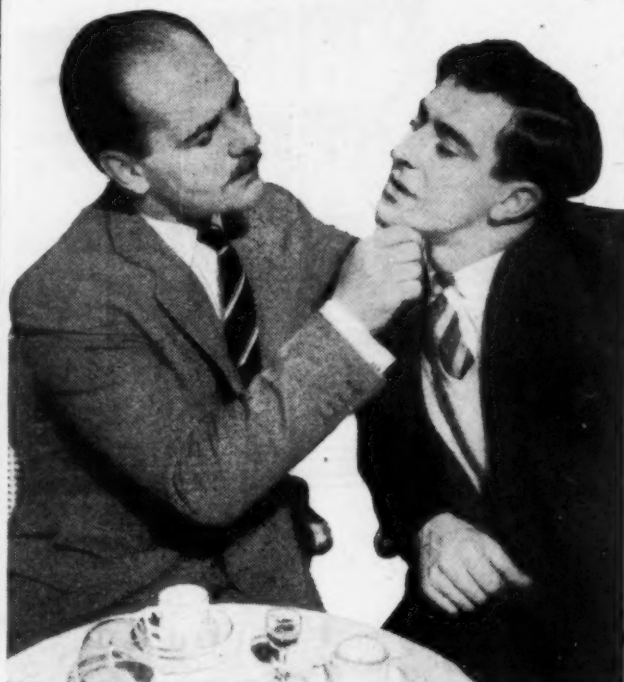
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"I've heard about this Rotary Action. What is it, exactly?"

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"Just the way the bristles grow, in fact?"

"Yes—that's what makes Rotary Action shaving so comfortable. And it's so close because, first, the shaving head gently stretches the skin."

"Well, you're certainly on a wonderful wicket there, Freddie. Think I'd better join you right away!"



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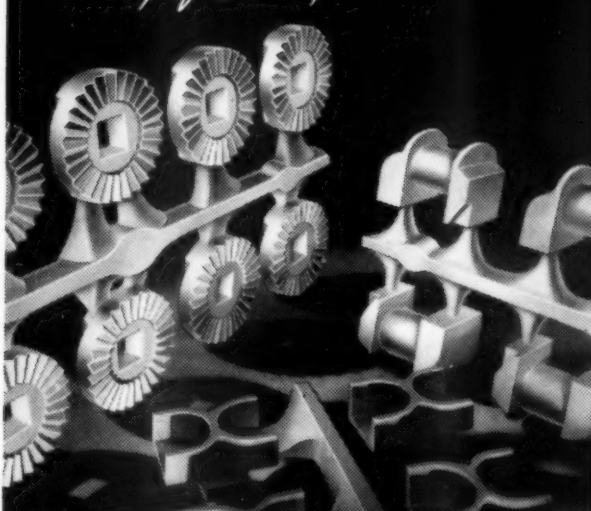
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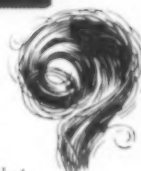


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